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**COUNTERINSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN: A LAST DITCH EFFORT TO TURN
AROUND A FAILING WAR**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

By

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B.A., Wittenberg University, 2009

2014
Wright State University

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

06/27/2014

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY Benjamin Patrick McCullough ENTITLED Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: A Last Ditch Effort to Turn Around a Failing War BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

McCullough, Benjamin Patrick. M.A., International and Comparative Politics Program, Wright State University, 2013. Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: A Last Ditch Effort to Turn Around a Failing War

As the United States moved closer to ending its military involvement in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, intense debate on the relevance and success of the United States' counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy in the country continues. Many observers have been quick to declare the strategy a failure without fully analyzing the critical components of COIN doctrine that are necessary for a campaign to succeed, and the extent to which those components were in place in Afghanistan. This study examines the case of Afghanistan by determining whether the U.S.'s counterinsurgency strategy was successful in achieving the four main objectives identified by *FM 3-24* as necessary for COIN's success. This study also looks at whether or not the United States' COIN strategy was successful in generating and maintaining the public support needed to carry out a prolonged counterinsurgency operation. By utilizing a mix of deductive logic based on contemporary COIN theory and currently available scholarly resources, government documents, and U.S. and ISAF military field reports, this study seeks to answer whether the counterinsurgency strategy devised by Generals David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal was successful in achieving the four main objectives needed for the success of this strategy in Afghanistan.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAF	Afghan Air Force
ABP	Afghan Border Police
AfPak	Afghanistan/Pakistan
AGE	Anti-Government Element
ALP	Afghan Local Police
AMN	Afghan Mission Network
AMOI	Afghan Ministry of Interior
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANCOP	Afghan National Civil Order Police
ANG	Afghan National Government
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AO	Area of Operations
AQ	al Qaeda
AQI	al Qaeda in Iraq
ASFF	Afghanistan Security Forces Fund
ATA	Afghan Transitional Administration
AUP	Afghan Uniformed Police
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
CASEVAC	Casualty Evacuation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Groups
CIDNE	Combined Information Data Network Exchange
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CERP	Commanders' Emergency Response Program
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COMISAF	Commander International Security Assistance Force
COP	Combat Outpost
CPT	Counterterrorism Pursuit Team
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan
CT	Counterterrorism
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DoD	Department of Defense

EIA	Enemy Initiated Attack
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FC	Frontier Corps
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FM	Field Manual
FOB	Forward Operating Base
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GBU	Guided Bomb Unit
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Ground Forces Command
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HIG	Hizb-e-Islami-Gulbuddin
HN	Host Nation
HQN	Haqqani Network
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
INTSOAI	International Organization for Supreme Audit Institutions
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
JCOS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDAM	Joint Direct Attack Munition
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
KIA	Killed in Action
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
LTG	Lieutenant General
MCTF	Major Crimes Task Force
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps-Iraq
MNF-I	Multi-National Force-Iraq
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council

NTM-A	NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan
NWFP	Northwest Frontier Provinces
OBI	Open Budget Index
OBL	Osama bin Laden
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OGA	Other Government Agency
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PGF	Pro-Government Forces
PPIED	Pressure Plate Improvised Explosive Devices
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
QS	Quetta Shura
RASR	Regional Command ANSF Assessment Report
RC E	Regional Command East
RC S	Regional Command South
RC SW	Regional Command Southwest
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
ROE	Rules of Engagement
ROL	Rule of Law
SAS	British Special Air Service
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SIU	Sensitive Investigations Unit
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force

USAFCENT
USAID

USMC
USN
VAIEDs

WIA

United States Air Force Central
United States Agency for International
Development
United States Marine Corps
United States Navy
Victim Activated Improvised Explosive
Devices
Wounded in Action

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Back in 2001, the Taliban appeared to have been all but defeated. On October 7th, 2001, “the United States invaded Afghanistan in retaliation for the September 11th attacks, and in a matter of months had overthrown the Taliban regime.”¹ In December 2001, Hamid Karzai had been appointed the interim Afghan president by a loya jirga (grand council), and in January 2002 the international community had agreed to provide extensive assistance to stabilize and rebuild the Afghan state. By mid-2002, U.S. SOF forces were chasing the last remnants of the Taliban out of the country and hunting down al Qaeda terrorists.² “Some individuals involved in the early months of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) argued that it had revitalized the American way of war.”³

Unfortunately, the war in Afghanistan soon became a sideshow to the war in Iraq and “became hobbled by strategic drift, conflicting tactics, and too few troops.”⁴ Since 2002, the United States has suffered over 2,335 Americans killed with many more seriously injured. Thousands of Afghans have been killed as well. The U.S. “has also spent close to \$1 trillion trying to turn Afghanistan into a modern function state.”⁵ Despite these efforts, Afghanistan continues to be plagued by Islamic extremism, tribal rivalry, and a Taliban insurgency that has shown little or no sign of giving up.

¹ Theo Farrel & Antonio Giustozzi, “The Taliban at War: Inside the Helmand Insurgency, 2004-2012.” *International Affairs* (July 12, 2013), 845.

² Donald P. Wright, *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 17.

³ Henry A. Crumpton, “Intelligence and War: Afghanistan 2001-2002,” in *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*, ed. Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 177.

⁴ Nathaniel C. Fick, & John A. Nagl, “Counterinsurgency Field Manual: Afghanistan Edition,” <http://www.cnas.org/node/648> [accessed January 18 - January 12, 2009], 1.

⁵ Gian Gentile “America’s nation-building at Gunpoint,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 2013.

Of the various strategies the United States has used in Afghanistan over the past thirteen years, “the 2009 troop surge was by far the most ambitious and expensive.”⁶ At the center of this Afghan surge was a protect-the-population counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy promoted by Generals David Petraeus, Stanley McChrystal, and Admiral Mike Mullen. “As recently as 2006, the country’s top generals were openly scorning COIN as a concept; and then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld all but banned the term’s utterance.”⁷ Despite being enormously controversial both inside and outside the defense and intelligence community, counterinsurgency soon became “enshrined as Army doctrine, and promoted at the highest levels of the Pentagon.”⁸ Much of this fanfare was due to the belief that the counterinsurgency strategy promoted by General Petraeus had helped to turn the tide in Iraq in 2007.⁹

At the heart of this new doctrine is *Field Manual 3-24*, jointly published by the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. Directed by General David Petraeus, whose COIN strategy is widely credited with pulling “Iraq from the abyss,”¹⁰ this manual embraces a model commonly referred to “clear, hold, and build.” This, in turn, “enables the implementation of political, social, and economic programs designed to reduce the appeal of the insurgency and ‘build’ the government’s legitimacy.”¹¹ Army *FM 3-24* also argues “that most active, passive, and potential supporters of an insurgency – whether they are

⁶ Karl W. Eikenberry “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/136845> [accessed October 17 – September/October 2013], 1.

⁷ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138459/fred-kaplan/the-end-of-the-age-of-petraeus> [accessed February 27 – February 12, 2013], 75.

⁸ Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 117.

⁹ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus.” 75.

¹⁰ Nathaniel C. Fick, & John A. Nagl, “Counterinsurgency Field Manual: Afghanistan Edition,” <http://www.cnas.org/node/648> [accessed January 18 - January 12, 2009], 1.

¹¹ Colin H. Kahl, “COIN of the Realm.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63035/colin-h-kahl/coin-of-the-realm> [accessed April 19 – December 2007], 170.

ideological, ethnic, or religious in character – can be won over through the provision of security, since citizens seek to ally with groups that can guarantee their safety.”¹²

According to Colonel Paul Gentile (2013), *Field Manual 3-24* has become the most talked about, praised, and influential military doctrine in generations.¹³

“A typical American reader strolling through the aisles of a Barnes & Noble bookstore can sip a latte while perusing army doctrine.”¹⁴

Shortly after its release in December 2006, *FM 3-24* was downloaded from the Internet more than 1.5 million times.¹⁵ “Samantha Power, a special advisor to President Obama, wrote a *New York Times* review of *FM 3-24* in 2007, wherein she characterized the doctrine as a ‘21st Century strategy.’”¹⁶ The University of Chicago also published a public edition that has a written endorsement from General Petraeus, who remarks that this manual is surely “on the bedside table of the President, Vice President, and the Secretary of Defense and according to the general, deserves a place on the bedside table of every American too.”¹⁷

Reinforced by retired four-star general Jack Kean and influential civilian analysts such as Frederick and Kimberly Kagan, Generals Petraeus, McChrystal and Admiral Mullen “confidently pointed to *Field Manual 3-24* as the authoritative playbook for success in Afghanistan.”¹⁸ When President Obama outlined his new Afghanistan strategy and ordered the deployment of an additional 30,000 troops during a speech at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York on December 1, 2009, “the Pentagon

¹² U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 1-108.

¹³ Gian Gentile “America’s nation-building at Gunpoint,” *Los Angeles Times*, 1.

¹⁴ Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America’s Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency* (New York: The New Press), 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁷ University of Chicago Press, *The U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press), xliii

¹⁸ Karl W. Eikenberry “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan,” 1.

was successful in ensuring that the major tenets of COIN doctrine were also incorporated into the revised operation plan.”¹⁹

The stated aim of this strategy was to “protect key parts of southern Afghanistan from Taliban advances: once that mission was completed, they would swing east to pacify areas around Kabul.”²⁰ This “clear, hold, and build” strategy would also

“provide valuable time to expand the Afghan army, disburse reconstruction assistance and create – in conjunction with the State Department – local governments in places where there had been very little government influence, reasoning that generating Afghan-led security and indigenous civil administration would convince people to stop supporting the insurgency.”²¹

Thus, with continuous outside efforts, supporters of the strategy argued, “the capacity of the Afghan government would steadily grow, the levels of U.S. and international assistance would decline, and the insurgency would eventually be defeated.”²²

Between the years 2010 to 2012 the strategy is credited for inflicting heavy losses and pushing the Taliban out of large stretches of southern Afghanistan. At the same time the United States and international community “poured billions of dollars into short-term reconstruction projects, while accelerating the development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).”²³ Despite these efforts, Afghanistan continued to experience floundering reconstruction and widespread misgovernance. Moreover, the Taliban’s capability to carry out high profile attacks throughout most of the country showed that the insurgency not only survived the surge, but by some indicators had emerged even stronger. Thus, there was little fanfare from the White House or Pentagon when the last

¹⁹ Ibid., 1.

²⁰ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “The Afghan Surge is Over,” http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/25/the_afghan_surge_is_over [accessed April 24-September 25, 2012], 1.

²¹ Frances Z. Brown, “Taking Stock of the Surge,” http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/09/26/taking/_stock_of_the_surge_from_the_bottom_up [accessed January 20 – September 26, 2012], 4.

²² Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “The Afghan Surge is Over,” http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/25/the_afghan_surge_is_over [accessed April 24-September 25, 2012], 1.

²³ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*, 37.

of the 30,000 surge troops sent overseas four years ago were withdrawn in September 2012.²⁴ Instead of issuing some grand proclamation of success, the job fell to then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta during a visit to New Zealand to announce that the last the of the surge troops dispatched by President Obama had left Afghanistan.²⁵

With a majority of U.S. and NATO troops withdrawing in 2014, and the Obama administration indicating that the U.S. military will no longer be built for large-scale, counterinsurgency operations, many military observers, politicians, and critics have been quick to declare COIN a failure in Afghanistan and a strategy that has no role in future conflicts involving the United States.²⁶ “For a military built on avoiding casualties with quick, decisive victories, many believe counterinsurgency veers far too close to nation-building and other political tasks that soldiers are ill equipped to handle.”²⁷ According to Karl W. Eikenberry (2011), it is

“sheer hubris to think that American military personnel without the appropriate language skills and with only a superficial understanding of Afghan culture could, on six-or 12-month tours, somehow deliver to Afghan villages everything asked of them by *FM 3-24*. The typical 21-year old marine is hard-pressed to win the heart and mind of his mother-in-law; can he really be expected to do the same with an ethnocentric Pashtun tribal elder?”²⁸

Other critics of the Afghan COIN strategy attack it as “cynically justifying the United States’ continued presence in Afghanistan – neocolonialism dressed up in PowerPoint.”²⁹

In many cases, Coalition operations “are seen as intrusive, unjustified, or using

²⁴ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “The Afghan Surge is Over,” http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/25/the_afghan_surge_is_over [accessed April 24-September 25, 2012], 4

²⁵ Craig Whitlock, “Final ‘surge’ troops leave Afghanistan,” *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2012

²⁶ J. Dana Stuster, “To COIN or Not?” http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/03/18/to_coin_or_not [accessed October 17-March 18, 2013], 2.

²⁷ Ibid. 2.

²⁸ Karl W. Eikenberry “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan.” 3.

²⁹ Fick & Nagl, “Counterinsurgency Field Manual: Afghanistan Ed”, 1.

excessive force; they caused some 2,500 civilian deaths between 2007 and 2010.”³⁰

Moreover, these operations are seen by many as expanding the authority of a predatory, illegitimate government.³¹ A final argument made by COIN critics is that although the Taliban suffered heavy losses in Afghanistan, they continue to remain active and have expanded their presence in the eastern and northern parts of the country.³² According to the International Security Assistance Force [ISAF], “insurgents launched more than twice as many attacks across the country in 2012 as they did in 2008 – an average of some 500 attacks per week.”³³

Despite these critiques, there are very few studies that have fully analyzed and examined the critical components of COIN doctrine identified by *FM 3-24* needed to win a counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan. Thus, what makes this study unique is that it examines the case of Afghanistan by determining whether or not the United States was successful in achieving the four main objectives identified by *Field Manual 3-24* needed for the surge and its accompanying COIN strategy to prevail in Afghanistan:

1. The United States needed to secure Afghanistan’s border with Pakistan, while gaining its support in cracking down on insurgent sanctuaries on its soil.
2. The United States had to win over the “hearts and minds” of the Afghan people and in particular the Pashtun tribes.
3. The U.S. had to promote a more capable and stable Afghan National Government.

³⁰ Waldman, Matt. “System Failure: The Underlying Causes of U.S. Policy-Making Errors in Afghanistan.” *International Affairs* (February 26, 2013): 825.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 829.

³² Bing, West, Learning From Our Wrong Turn: Why American Counterinsurgency has Proved to be Unworkable,” <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/356323/learning-our-wrong-turn-bing-west> [accessed October 17 – August 21, 2013], 2

³³ Matt Waldman, “Taliban Qatar Office: A small Step Forward,” <https://www.chathamhouse.org/media/comment/view/192553> [accessed October 17-June 20, 2013], 2.

4. Afghanistan's National Security Forces (ANSF) had to be ready and willing to assume control of areas that been cleared of insurgents by American troops.

Therefore, the main research question to be addressed by this study is: "was the United States' counterinsurgency strategy successful in achieving the four main objectives identified by *Field Manual 3-24* needed to win in Afghanistan?"

Even though this research question will be the main focus of the paper, a list of secondary questions are needed to help in determining whether or not the U.S. was successful in meeting the four main objectives of the counterinsurgency strategy devised by Generals David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal. Proponents of the U.S. Afghan counterinsurgency strategy with some merit have claimed that the experiment was too little, too late because "an industrial-strength COIN approach was not rigorously applied until eight years after the war began, and too little because even then, limits were placed on the size and duration of the surge, making it more difficult to change the calculations of Afghan friends and enemies."³⁴ Thus, secondary questions to be addressed by this study include:

1. Was the COIN strategy devised by Generals David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal and Admiral Mike Mullen fully implemented?
2. Was the United States able to achieve its primary objective of reversing the Taliban's momentum and training Afghanistan's National Security Forces?
3. Was the U.S. able to promote a more capable and accountable Afghan government?
4. Did the United States' heavy reliance on Pakistan to reign in Afghan insurgents and militants help or hinder the U.S. in its efforts to achieve the

³⁴ Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency," 2.

main objectives of its counterinsurgency strategy?

By utilizing a mix of deductive logic based on contemporary COIN theory and currently available scholarly resources, government documents, military field manuals, and U.S. & NATO military field reports, this study hypothesizes that the counterinsurgency strategy promoted by General David Petraeus, General Stanley McChrystal, and Admiral Mike Mullen was never fully implemented and this set the mission up for only partial success. More importantly, this study also argues that the population-centric strategy promoted by the military leadership was the wrong strategy to implement in Afghanistan due to conditions on the ground.

CHAPTER II: THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN AMERICAN COIN THEORY: POST- VIETNAM TO IRAQ

The American Army of 2003 was organized, designed, trained, and equipped to defeat another conventional army; indeed, it had no peer in that arena. It was, however, unprepared for an enemy who understood that it could not hope to defeat the U.S. Army on a conventional battlefield, and who therefore chose to wage war against America from the shadows.

-LTC John Nagl

According to Thomas X. Hammes (2005), “insurgency has been the most prevalent form of armed conflict since at least 1949.”¹ Thus, most Americans believe that insurgency is a relatively modern phenomenon, invented by Mao Zedong and refined by his adversaries.² In reality, “insurgencies have been around since the dawn of recorded history, as have the means used to suppress them.”³ That said, “the strategic significance of insurgency has ebbed and flowed over time.”⁴

Insurgency took on strategic significance at the beginning of the Cold War “as the Soviet Union looked to insurgencies as an indirect means of weakening the West.”⁵ Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviets backed multiple insurgencies in Africa and Latin America. Beginning in 1975, “Communist or Marxist regimes came to power in South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen,

¹ Thomas X. Hammes, “Countering Evolved Insurgent Networks,” *Military Review* (2006), 19.

² Steven Metz, “Counterinsurgency and American Strategy, Past & Future.” <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/Articles/11248/counterinsurgency-and-american-strategy-past-and-future> [accessed March 9th – January 12, 2009], 1.

³ Peter R. Mansoor, “From Baghdad to Kabul: The Historical Roots of U.S. Counterinsurgency Doctrine,” <http://origins.osu.edu/article/baghdad-kabul-historical-roots-us-counterinsurgency-doctrine>, [accessed April 19- October 2009] 1.

⁴ Steven Metz, “Counterinsurgency and American Strategy,” 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

Grenada, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, and Suriname.”⁶ However, with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, interest in insurgency declined as many Americans anticipated for them at least, that “the scourge of war was no more.”⁷ Unfortunately, the emergence of a fresh set of conflicts and the September 11th terrorist attacks dashed this promise. With the 9/11 attacks, counterinsurgency once again took on strategic significance as terror groups such as al Qaeda (AQ) hoped to use insurgency as a means of overthrowing hostile regimes and replacing with ones that were more sympathetic to their cause.⁸ Thus, counterinsurgency once again became the centerpiece of U.S. defense policy and military strategy.

For most of its history, “the U.S. has been mediocre in counterinsurgency activities, if not actively hostile to the idea that it should even bother worrying about them.”⁹ These types of conflicts “seem utterly alien to those schooled in the history of America’s big wars – which is to say virtually anyone interested in American military history.”¹⁰ The big wars, especially the Civil War and World War II, are celebrated in numerous movies, books, and documentaries. As it happens, “these were America’s only experiences in total war in which the nation staked all of its blood and treasure to achieve the relatively quick and unconditional surrender of the enemy.”¹¹ Some historians, military officials, politicians, and policy makers speak of an ‘American way of war: war that “annihilates the enemy, war that relies on advanced technology and massive

⁶ Stephen J. Solarz, “Next Stop Angola,” <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/politics/79546/next-stop-angola-reagan-doctrine-communism-intervention> [accessed October 27-December 02, 1985], 1.

⁷ James Arnold, *Jungle of Snakes: A Century of Counterinsurgency Warfare from the Philippines to Iraq* (New York: Bloomsburg Press, 2009), 1.

⁸ Steven Metz, “Counterinsurgency and American Strategy, 2.

⁹ Michael E. O’Hanlon, “America’s History of Counterinsurgency,” <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2009/06/counterinsurgency-ohanlon> [accessed October 10-June 2009], 1.

¹⁰ Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books Press, 2002), 21.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

firepower to minimize casualties among U.S. forces; war that results in total victory.”¹²

In the wake of the Vietnam War, “the Pentagon threw out the books on what they termed ‘low-intensity conflict’ and chose to focus instead on the prospect of a major conventional war with the Soviets.”¹³ The Army, in particular, “went back to its preferred focus on Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union and a possible high-end armored battle in the Fulda Gap of Germany.”¹⁴ According to Michael O’Hanlon (2011), the Army’s “equipment purchases, force structure decisions, approaches to training and institutional ethnos and culture remained focused almost entirely on classic maneuver warfare.”¹⁵ The blitzkrieg victory in the 1991 Gulf War only reinforced this approach as the United States and its allies quickly routed Saddam’s forces in less than 96 hours of ground combat between February 24 and February 28, 1991. Even though Desert Storm proved the U.S. military “was ready for heavy air-ground battle,”¹⁶ it failed to foreshadow the types of conflicts that the United States would soon be fighting.

Shortly after the Vietnam War, “counterinsurgency thought, theory, and practice had been relegated to the special operations community, whose primary focus was on small-scale nation assistance/support to counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare.”¹⁷ Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. did participate in a string of small wars in El Salvador, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and the Balkans. Despite the success the U.S. achieved during the invasions of Grenada and Panama in the 1980s and the bombing

¹² John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 43.

¹³ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138459/fred-kaplan/the-end-of-the-age-of-petraeus> [accessed February 27- February 12, 2013], 76.

¹⁴ O’Hanlon, “America’s History of Counterinsurgency.” 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷ Janine Davidson, “Principles of Modern American Counterinsurgency: Evolution and Debate,” http://www.brookings.edu/media/research/files/papers/2009/0608%20counterinsurgency%20davidson/0608_counterinsurgency_davidson [accessed October 10 – June 8, 2009], 2.

of Libya in 1986, these campaigns were belittled as military operations other than war, abbreviated as MOOTW. Pronounced moot-wah, “MOOTW was a doctrinal term used in the 1990s by the American military to describe a large number of what they considered non-traditional tasks.”¹⁸

According to Janine David (2009), the *Joint Publication for Operations 3-07*:

Joint Doctrine for Operations Other than War, defined the term as:

“operations that encompass the use of military capabilities across the range of military operations short of war. These military actions can be applied to complement any combination of the other instruments of national power and occur before, during, and after war.”¹⁹

JP 3-07 also goes on to explain “that these missions can be either combat or non-combat and include missions as diverse as arms control, combating terrorism, support to counter-drug operations, COIN, humanitarian assistance, peace operations, etc.”²⁰

Even though a majority of today’s top military officers rose through the ranks fighting these small wars, “the diverse range of operations included under the category of MOOTW, combined with the military tradition of focusing primarily on major theater warfare, led to a popular joke among officers that ‘MOOTW’ really means, ‘military operations other than *what we want to do*.’”²¹ Moreover, during a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCOS), then-chairman of the JCOS General John Shalikashvili, reportedly once muttered, “Real men don’t do mootwah.”²²

Thus, little counterinsurgency doctrine existed when the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. Instead, the U.S. military continued to stick to its

¹⁸ Ibid., 8.

¹⁹ Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-07: Joint Doctrine for Operations Other Than War* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing, June 16, 1995), 3.

²⁰ Janine Davidson, “Principles of Modern American Counterinsurgency,” 8.

²¹ Ibid., 8.

²² Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus.” 76.

conventional biases as the George W. Bush administration came up with a “light footprint” strategy designed to defeat the enemies and get out quickly to avoid getting bogged down. Even though U.S. forces were very successful in overthrowing the governments of the Taliban and of Saddam Hussein, the strategy soon “revealed its limits as Iraq began unraveling shortly after the collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime.”²³

According to Peter Mansoor, “the shortage of U.S. ground forces, combined with the disbanding of the Iraqi army by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer meant that there were insufficient troops available to execute a counterinsurgency strategy that focused on the protection of the Iraqi people.”²⁴ Instead, U.S. forces chose to focus on destroying insurgent forces and their hideouts.²⁵ These operations did little to secure the population as militants would return to areas recently cleared by U.S. forces once they returned to their bases²⁶

Frustrated with Iraq’s deteriorating security conditions, General George Casey pursued a totally different approach in the fall of 2004. Believing that U.S. forces were now viewed as a “virus infecting Iraqi society,”²⁷ Casey chose to remove them from their outposts in Iraqi cities and move them to large forward operations bases (FOBs) on the outskirts.²⁸ Thus, the U.S. pursued a policy of handing over security responsibilities to the newly created Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).

Unfortunately, “the lack of trained and ready Iraqi police and army units doomed

²³ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138459/fred-kaplan/the-end-of-the-age-of-petraeus> [accessed February 27- February 12, 2013], 75.

²⁴ Peter R. Mansoor, “From Baghdad to Kabul: The Historical Roots of U.S. Counterinsurgency Doctrine,” <http://origins.osu.edu/article/baghdad-kabul-historical-roots-us-counterinsurgency-doctrine/page/0/1> [accessed April 19-October 2009], 3.

²⁵ Ibid., 3.

²⁶ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), 13.

²⁷ Peter R. Mansoor, “From Baghdad to Kabul,” 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 3.

this policy from the beginning.”²⁹ As U.S. and Coalition forces handed over responsibility to ISF units and withdrew to their bases, “Sunni insurgents and Shi’ite militias began taking control of large parts of Baghdad and other neighboring cities.”³⁰ Throughout 2004 and 2005, different factions such as Muqtada al Sadr’s Mahdi Army and al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) had built up their organizations and had begun setting up death squads and checkpoints around their respective neighborhoods.³¹ Sunni extremists also “began using intimidation and other forms of ‘soft’ ethnic cleansing such as threats, physical intimidation, blackmail, seizure of property, raids on homes and businesses, checkpoints, kidnappings, and extortion to gain a foothold in Sunni areas throughout Baghdad from where they could launch attacks on Shi’ite communities.”³²

Despite Coalition efforts, sectarian violence began to spread outside of Baghdad in early 2006, making it the most violent year in Iraq since the U.S. invasion in March 2003.³³ On February 22nd, 2006, Sunni insurgents affiliated with AQI detonated multiple explosives at the Al Askari Mosque effectively destroying its golden dome and severely damaging the mosque. Within hours of the bombing, 30 Sunni mosques were attacked in retaliation for the bombing.³⁴ “As the cycle of violence progressed, secular Sunnis and Shiites, lacking genuine security from the government, came to support the sectarian militias.”³⁵ This dynamic was “exacerbated by the U.S.’s steady transfer of power and responsibility to the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government, despite obvious signs that the

²⁹ Ibid., 3.

³⁰ Ibid., 4.

³¹ Anthony H. Cordesman, “Iraq’s Sectarian and Ethnic Violence and the Evolving Insurgency,” http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/120614_iraq_update.pdf [accessed November 1 – December 2006], 3.

³² Ibid., 3.

³³ John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back: The U.S. at War in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 2012), 159.

³⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman, “Iraq’s Sectarian and Ethnic Violence,” 4.

³⁵ Nir Rose, *Aftermath: Following the Bloodshed of America’s Wars in the Muslim World*, (New York: Nation Books, 2010), 101.

government was acting as a sectarian player in the vicious civil war.”³⁶

By the end of 2006, “there were well over 50 attacks and three car bombs per day on average in Baghdad alone.”³⁷ U.S. troop deaths also increased to 3,003 and Iraqi ethno-sectarian civilian deaths are estimated to have increased to more than 150,000.³⁸ According to counterinsurgency theorist David Kilcullen (2009), “between September 2006 and January 2007, civilian deaths peaked between 2,700 and 3,800 civilians killed per a month, with December 2006 being by far the worst month as killings peaked at around 125 per night, more than half of whom were people killed inside Baghdad city limits.”³⁹ Thus, by the end of 2006 it appeared that war in Iraq was all but lost as the country teetered on the brink of a full-scale civil war.⁴⁰

In an attempt to counter the ongoing insurgencies in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. Military began work on a new COIN doctrine directed by Army general David Petraeus and Marine Corps general James Mattis on February 23rd, 2006. The same day that work began on the new COIN manual at Fort Leavenworth, -- Sunni insurgents had detonated multiple explosives at the Golden Mosque, sending Iraq to the brink of civil war and “giving Petraeus a greater sense of urgency.”⁴¹ Petraeus had heard stirrings that in a year’s time, he might be sent back to Iraq as the new U.S. commander there.⁴² Thus, “pushing the manual through a resistant army bureaucracy and corraling support for COIN among opinion leaders now appeared vital not only to shifting the military’s

³⁶ David H. Ucko, *Militias, Tribes and Insurgents: The Challenge of Political Integration in Iraq, Conflict Security, and Development*, Vol. 8. No. 4, 357.

³⁷ David H. Petraeus, “How We Won in Iraq,” http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/29/david_petraeus_how_we_won_the_surge_in_iraq [accessed October 30th – October 30, 2013], 1.

³⁸ Darin E.W. Johnson, “2007 in Iraq: The Surge and Benchmarks – A New Way Forward,” 250

³⁹ David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 126.

⁴⁰ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble*, 56.

⁴¹ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus,” 80.

⁴² Paula Broadwell, *All In: The Education of General David Petraeus* (New York: Penguin Book Press, 2012), 126.

broader view of warfare, but also to avoiding catastrophe in Iraq.”⁴³ To be able to implement his strategy in Iraq, however, “he would need the cover of officially sanctioned doctrine, which the field manual if accepted, would provide.”⁴⁴

Put together “by a writing team of academics, military strategists, human rights lawyers, and journalists led by West Point history professor Conrad Crane,”⁴⁵ United States Army and Marine Corps’ *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (FM 3-24/3-33.5) embraces a model commonly referred to as “clear, hold, and build.” It directs the military to support the “host nation” government in combating insurgents by “clearing” areas and then to transition to a law enforcement model to “hold” them.⁴⁶ This, in turn, “enables the implementation of political, social, and economic programs designed to reduce the appeal of the insurgency and ‘build’ the government’s legitimacy.”⁴⁷

Army FM 3-24 also argues that “most active, passive, and potential supporters of an insurgency – whether they are ideological, ethnic, or religious in character – can be won over through the provision of security, since citizens seek to ally with groups that can guarantee their safety.”⁴⁸ Thus, the “population, rather than the insurgent movement, is the ‘center of gravity,’⁴⁹ and the military’s primary objective is protecting the population. Instead of patrolling in armored vehicles and being stationed on large bases, soldiers must live side by side with the people they are protecting.⁵⁰ Moreover, the military “must be ready to pick up the slack if civilian entities are slow to arrive, lack

⁴³ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁵ David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 17.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Washington: Department of Defense, 2006, 1-108

⁴⁷ Colin H. Kahl, “COIN of the Realm.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63035/colin-h-kahl/coin-of-the-realm> [accessed April 19 – December 2007], 170.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 171.

⁴⁹ Colin H. Kahl, “COIN of the Realm.” 171.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 171.

sufficient resources, or are incapable of conducting these activities in dangerous environments.”⁵¹

On December 16, 2006, the counterinsurgency doctrine manual that Generals Petraeus and Mattis had labored so hard to produce was finally published, “giving the U.S. military a new playbook for COIN operations and validating what many younger officers were discovering mistake by mistake at the tactical levels in Iraq.”⁵² Shortly after the 2006 midterm congressional elections, “President George W. Bush initiated a formal internal review of Iraq policy among his national security agencies to obtain policy options on a way forward in Iraq.”⁵³ The congressional midterm elections of 2006 in which the Democrats took control of Congress from the Republican Party were viewed as a repudiation of the war.⁵⁴

On January 4, 2007, President Bush delivered his long awaited speech on Iraq, *The New Way Forward*, during a primetime address. In the speech, Bush acknowledged “that despite the 2005 national elections in Iraq and the formation of a new Iraqi national unity government in 2006, Iraq had not made the security and political gains that he had hoped for.”⁵⁵ Against this backdrop President Bush ordered a “surge” of 40,000 troops to provide greater security in order to facilitate greater political reconciliation at the national level.⁵⁶

Shortly after his confirmation hearing on January 23rd, 2007, General Petraeus

⁵¹ Ibid., 171.

⁵² John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back*, 164.

⁵³ Darin E.W. Johnson, “2007 in Iraq: The Surge and Benchmarks – A New Way Forward,” <http://www.wcl.american.edu/journal/ilr/24/documents/Johnson.pdf> [accessed October 10 – December 8, 2012], 252.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 252.

⁵⁵ President George W. Bush, “The New Way Forward in Iraq” [accessed October 10 – January 10, 2007], <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/print/20070110-7.html> (acknowledging that the situation in Iraq was “unacceptable” to himself, as well as to the American people).

⁵⁶ Darin E.W. Johnson, “2007 in Iraq: The Surge and Benchmarks – A New Way Forward,” 252.

went to see President Bush in the Oval Office. “Betting his presidency on the success of the surge, Bush described the commitment of additional forces as a ‘double down’ strategy.”⁵⁷ Petraeus said it was more than that, according to a source briefed after the meeting. “This isn’t double down, Mr. President. It’s all in,” Petraeus stated.⁵⁸ “And we need the whole U.S. government to go all in, not just the military.”⁵⁹ At first, many experts viewed the “surge” as a simple reinforcement of American forces.⁶⁰ However, this new strategy was in fact a “comprehensive counterinsurgency approach, a civil military campaign that featured a number of important elements.”⁶¹

At the premise of this new COIN strategy was the idea that the Iraqi population was the “center of gravity” that required protection.⁶² According to Generals Petraeus and Raymond T. Ordierno (commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq), this was necessary “in order to prevent an escalating cycle of sectarian combat, and also to elicit support from the population so that it would not provide large numbers of additional recruits to the insurgencies.”⁶³ Another important component of the surge strategy was the “clear, hold, and build” concept which became the operative practice during Petraeus’s time in Iraq. As noted in *FM 3-24*, “U.S. forces could not kill or capture its way out of the industrial-strength insurgency that confronted U.S. troops in Iraq.”⁶⁴ Hence, U.S. forces

⁵⁷ Paula Broadwell, *All In: The Education of General David Petraeus*, 129.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁰ John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, and John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back: The U.S. at War in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 2012), 164.

⁶¹ Octavian Manea, “Reflections on the ‘Counterinsurgency Decade’: Small Wars Journal Interview with General David H. Petraeus,” <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=175793> [accessed October 10-September 1, 2013], 2.

⁶² David H. Petraeus, “How We Won in Iraq,” http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/29/david_petraeus_how_we_won_the_surge_in_iraq [accessed October 30th – October 30, 2013], 4.

⁶³ Michael O’Hanlon, “America’s History of Counterinsurgency,” 4.

⁶⁴ Peter Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), xii.

had “to identify those insurgents and militia members who were ‘reconcilable,’ and then had to persuade them to become part of the solution in Iraq rather than a continuing part of the problem.”⁶⁵

From January to June 2007, the surge forces gradually deployed to Iraq. Generals Petraeus and Ordierno ordered U.S. units to deploy off their FOBs “to establish smaller joint security stations and combat outposts in Iraqi neighborhoods and communities.”⁶⁶ In conjunction with community leaders, “Coalition forces emplaced cement barriers to wall off neighborhoods and markets to impede the movement of insurgents, militiamen, and terrorists.”⁶⁷ Iraqi units under the supervision of U.S. advisors also manned numerous checkpoints that made insurgent and terrorist movement more difficult and “provided much-needed security to the Iraqi people to protect them from terrorist violence and sectarian intimidation.”⁶⁸

The U.S. military also partnered with Iraqi security forces in supporting local neighborhood watch groups nicknamed the “Sons of Iraq.” Despite having been created in late 2006, the Awakening movement “could not have survived or spread without the support of U.S. commanders and the Iraqi government.”⁶⁹ According to Peter Mansoor (2013), “the arrival of U.S. reinforcements signaled renewed resolve and assured Sunni tribal leaders that they would not be abandoned once they turned their guns against al Qaeda-Iraq, as had happened once before.”⁷⁰ Many U.S. commanders were hesitant to

⁶⁵ David H. Petraeus, “How We Won in Iraq,” 3.

⁶⁶ Peter R. Mansoor, “From Baghdad to Kabul,” 6.

⁶⁷ Raymond T. Ordierno, “The Surge in Iraq: One Year Later,” <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/the-surge-in-iraq-one-year-later> [accessed October 30-March 13, 2008], 3.

⁶⁸ Peter R. Mansoor, “From Baghdad to Kabul,” 6.

⁶⁹ Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, & Jacob N. Shapiro, “Testing the Surge, Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq,” https://www.princeton.edu/~jns/publications/BFS_2012_Testing_the_Surge_IS_37.1.pdf [accessed October 30-January 31, 2012], 11.

⁷⁰ Peter Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus*, 266.

support these groups at first because “most of them had American blood on their hands.”⁷¹ Moreover, many Shia leaders including Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki had concerns over the spread of the movement into Baghdad and areas near predominantly Shiite or mixed communities.⁷² Thus, Maliki only allowed the United States to support awakenings in strictly Sunni areas such as Anbar Province at first.⁷³

By the end of 2008, the U.S. and Iraqi government had more than 100,000 “Sons of Iraq” (more than 20,000 of them Shi’ite) on their payroll.⁷⁴ The improved security and the increase of Iraqi security forces by more than 140,000 troops along with their improved capabilities, “emboldened Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to confront the *Jaish al-Mahdi* militia and bring the vast majority of southern and central Iraq under Iraqi government control.”⁷⁵ Another main component of the surge strategy that helped to bolster the security gains made by U.S. and Iraqi forces was the intensive campaign of targeted operations to capture or kill key insurgent and militia leaders and operatives by U.S. and British Special Operations Forces.⁷⁶ Under the command of then-Lt. General Stanley McChrystal, commander of the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and the Counter-Terrorism Special Operations Task Force, U.S. and British SOF units were “relentless in their pursuit of al Qaeda and other Sunni Arab extremist leaders, bomb makers, financiers, and propaganda cells – and of key Iranian-supported Shi’ite Arab extremists.”⁷⁷

By the end of 2007, as many as 10 to 15 targeted operations were being carried

⁷¹ David H. Petraeus, “How We Won in Iraq,” 6.

⁷² Ibid., 266.

⁷³ Peter R. Mansoor, “From Baghdad to Kabul,” 1.

⁷⁴ David H. Petraeus, “How We Won in Iraq,” 6.

⁷⁵ Peter R. Mansoor, “From Baghdad to Kabul,” 6.

⁷⁶ Peter Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus*, xiv.

⁷⁷ David H. Petraeus, “How We Won in Iraq,” 5.

out a night, “removing from the battlefield a significant proportion of the senior and midlevel extremist group leaders, explosives experts, planners, financiers, and organizers in in Iraq.”⁷⁸ In less than a year civilian deaths had decreased by more than 70% as violence in Iraq had declined by 85% from its peak at the end of 2006.⁷⁹ In the Baghdad Security Districts specifically, “ethno sectarian attacks and deaths decreased by more than 90 percent over the course of 2007.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁹ Raymond T. Odierno, “The Surge in Iraq: One Year Later,” 3.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 3.

CHAPTER III: FROM VICTORY TO THE BRINK OF DEFEAT: THE UNITED STATES IN AFGHANISTAN 2001-2009

As for the United States' future in Afghanistan, it will be fire and hell and total defeat, God willing, as it was for their predecessors – the Soviets and before them, the British.

-Mullah Omar

At the beginning of 2002, it appeared the Taliban had all but been defeated. In the previous three months “thousands had been killed by American bombs or wounded and left to die in their burned-out pickup trucks as the Taliban proved to be little match for overwhelming American firepower.”¹ According to U.S. intelligence estimates, over 3,000-4,000 Taliban fighters were killed during this timeframe.² With the fall of Kabul, Kandahar, and other major cities, thousands more were captured by anti-Taliban militias including the Northern Alliance.³ Those who escaped death or capture fled to Pakistan⁴. Mullah Omar, with a handful of bodyguards, had gone underground, where he could easily avoid the infrequent U.S. military sweeps.⁵ Thus, the remnants of the Taliban who were able to escape into Pakistan were initially a demoralized lot.⁶

¹ Anand Gopal, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar,” http://newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/kandahar_0.pdf [accessed November 12 – November 2010], 7.

² Carl Conetta, “Strange Victory: A Critical Appraisal of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Afghanistan War,” <http://www.comw.org/pda/0201strangevic.html> [accessed November 13 - January 30, 2002], 4.

³ Anand Gopal, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar,” 8.

⁴ Alex Strick van Linschoten & Felix Keuhn, “Separating the Taliban from al Qaeda: The Core of Success in Afghanistan,” http://cic.es.its.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/gregg_sep_tal_alqaeda.pdf [accessed March 19-February 2011], 4.

⁵ Thomas Ruttig, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Negotiations with the Taliban: History and Prospects for the Future,” 6.

⁶ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: How the War Against Islamic Extremism is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, (New York: Penguin Books Limited, 2008), 268.

Many senior figures, “including some of Mullah Omar’s chief lieutenants were open to the possibility of reconciliation and abandoning the fight.”¹ In November 2002, “the entire leadership, except for Mullah Omar, gathered in the city of Karachi, Pakistan to discuss possible reconciliation with the Afghan government.”² This group included “Tayeb Agha, at one point Mullah Omar’s top aide; Mullah Beradar, the movement’s number two after the collapse of the Taliban regime, then already a powerful commander; Sayed Muhammad Haqqani, the former ambassador to Pakistan; Mullah Obaidullah, the defense minister; Mullah Abdul Razzak, the interior minister; and many others.”³

According to Anand Gopal (2010), “at this juncture, these leading Taliban members (as well as the rank and file) did not appear to view the government and its foreign backers as necessitating a 1980s-type jihad.”⁴ At the same time, Jalaluddin Haqqani, one of the most important Taliban military commanders fighting the Afghan government and U.S. forces in Afghanistan, sent his brother Ibrahim to Kabul to meet with American and Afghan government officials to inquire about the possibility of reconciliation.⁵

Despite these overtures, neither the United States nor the Afghan government saw any reason to engage with the Taliban as they considered them to be a spent force.⁶

Instead, senior and mid-level Taliban “were hounded, a short-sighted tactic that helped to

¹ Anand Gopal, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar,” 8.

² Alex Strick van Linschoten & Felix Keuhn, “Separating the Taliban from al Qaeda: The Core of Success in Afghanistan,” http://cic.es.its.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/gregg_sep_tal_alqaeda.pdf [accessed March 19-February 2011], 5.

³ Thomas Ruttig, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Negotiations with the Taliban: History and Prospects for the Future,” http://www.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/Ruttig_Negotiations_With_The_Taliban_1.pdf [accessed November 13 – May, 2011], 6

⁴ Anand Gopal, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar,” 7.

⁵ Vahid Brown & Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973-2012*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 124.

⁶ Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History From Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2009), 304. .

sow the first seeds of insurgency.”⁷ Many Taliban leaders were double crossed, handed over after being promised protection (such as Taliban deputy head of intelligence Abdul Haq Waseq) and harassed in their homes.⁸ Those detained or captured were usually mistreated by U.S. and Afghan forces. Moreover, “family members of Taliban and tribal elders fell victim to the abuses by individuals associated with the new interim government and were alienated and sidelined.”⁹ Thus, “the failure to grant amnesty to Taliban figures who had abandoned the movement and accepted the new Afghan government had repercussions far beyond the specific individuals targeted.”¹⁰

Soon “a sense began to develop among those formerly connected to the regime, from senior officials to rank-and-file fighters, that there was no place for them in the post-2001 society.”¹¹ Believing that they lacked any other alternatives, many of those detained and targeted began reaching out to the Taliban leadership that was regrouping across the border in Quetta, Pakistan.¹² Leaders such as Tayeb Agha, Mullah Obaidullah, and Mullah Beradar, “who were once open to the possibility of reconciliation, slipped back into Pakistan and became leading figures in the movement’s resurgence.”¹³

Many Afghans were initially supportive of the international intervention, particularly as the Afghan Transitional Administration (ATA) promised positive changes in their lives.¹⁴ “Barbershops, DVD stores, and hairdressers began to appear throughout Afghanistan as thousands of Afghans rushed out to get cell phones, radios, and television

⁷ Kate Clark, “Talking to the Taliban: A British Perspective,” 3.

⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁹ Thomas H. Johnson, “On the Edge of the Big Muddy: The Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan,” www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/Docs/Pubs/Johnson_CEFQ_May%2007.pdf [accessed December 1 – May 2007], 97.

¹⁰ Anand Gopal, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar,” 7.

¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹² Alex Strick van Linschoten & Felix Keuhn, “Separating the Taliban from al Qaeda,” 6.

¹³ Anand Gopal, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar,” 11.

¹⁴ Ibid., 11.

sets.”¹⁵ Many Afghans were also very thankful for all of the aid and assistance being provided by foreign aid workers as they helped to build new schools, hospitals, and bridges. They also took advantage of new roads being built throughout the country.¹⁶

Between 2002 and 2004, this attitude began to change “as many Pashtuns became disenchanted with the ATA which was widely viewed as being controlled by the Panshiri Tajik Faction that held the government’s key ministries of defense, interior, and foreign affairs.”¹⁷ Pashtun “suspicions and mistrust of the government were further heightened”¹⁸ by the Afghan Transitional Government’s inability to protect Pashtuns from abuses being carried out by insurgents and the various anti-Taliban militias. During the invasion the United States “driven by immediate military objectives,”¹⁹ entered alliances with a group of warlords and anti-Taliban commanders that “captured state apparatus for personal gain; warlords and semi-warlords often fought over shares of the state and monopolized access to the government, foreign forces, and resources, including contracts with those same forces.”²⁰ The U.S. unknowingly became a pawn used by their Afghan partners to target their enemies.

Moreover, the new Afghan government, supported by the international community, “was plagued by entrenched corruption and nepotism.”²¹ According to Transparency International on their rates of corruption in 2002, Afghanistan ranked 179th, with only Somalia ranking lower.²² Despite his pledges to combat corruption, Hamid Karzai “did not support his anti-corruption squads when they attempted to arrest and

¹⁵ Ibid., 196.

¹⁶ Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified*,” 196.

¹⁷ Thomas H. Johnson, “On the Edge of the Big Muddy: The Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan,” 97.

¹⁸ Ibid., 98.

¹⁹ Alex Strick van Linschoten & Felix Keuhn, “Separating the Taliban from al Qaeda,” 8.

²⁰ Alex Strick van Linschoten & Felix Keuhn, “Separating the Taliban from al Qaeda,” 8.

²¹ Ibid., 8.

²² Ian S. Livingston & Michael O’Hanlon, “Afghanistan Index,” 23.

remove corrupt ministers and governors, especially those officials who were friends.”²³ In addition,” the underpaid Afghan National Police (ANP) earned a reputation for demanding bribes which infuriated those they shook down and played into the hands of the Taliban.”²⁴ Not surprisingly, Karzai began to appear weak and corrupt to many Afghans who grew to despise corrupt politicians, judges, and police who represented the local face of the Afghan government.²⁵ His appeal began to diminish in the West as well as many foreign officials began referring to Afghanistan as “Corruptistan.”²⁶

Many Afghans were also becoming upset over the lack of international aid being provided by the international community.²⁷ Despite the spending of millions of dollars, a majority of Afghans continued to live in extreme poverty. According to Matt Waldman (2008), “far too much aid has been prescriptive and driven by donor priorities rather than responsive to evident Afghan needs and preferences.”²⁸ Moreover, the average aid going to Afghanistan per person was \$80, while postwar Bosnians, a far more advanced European people, received \$275.”²⁹ Yet, Afghanistan “was the poorest country in Eurasia, with a life expectancy in the low 40s and one of the world’s highest infant mortality rates.”³⁰

Finally, a big source of frustration and fuel for the insurgency “was the heavy-handed tactics of U.S. military operations in Pashtun areas of the country.”³¹ Despite warnings from many Afghan observers, such “hard-knock” operations continued to be

²³ Michael Huffman, “How the U.S. Lost the Corruption Battle in Afghanistan,” 6.

²⁴ Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified*, 197.

²⁵ Dexter Filkins, “Inside Corrupt-istan: A Loss of Faith in Leaders,” *New York Times*, September 4, 2010.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁷ Matt Waldman, “Falling Short: Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan,” http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/ACBAR_aid_effectiveness_paper_pdf [accessed December 7 – March 2008], 2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁹ Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified*, 198

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

³¹ Thomas H. Johnson, “On the Edge of the Big Muddy,” 97.

standard procedure for several years, alienating much of the populace.³² Meanwhile, the leadership at CENTCOM continued to view the Afghan conflict “as one of counterterrorism, not counterinsurgency, and conducted operations in the rural areas accordingly.”³³ As one U.S. PRT leader commented, “Black Ops [Special Operations counterterrorism forces] do more damage in my province in one night than I can undo in six months.”³⁴

Taliban Resurgent: 2002-2008

Throughout the spring of 2002, the remnants of the Taliban that were able to escape into Pakistan began preparations “to launch the insurgency that Mullah Omar had promised during the Taliban’s last days in power.”³⁵ Commanders such as Mullah Dadullah were sent to recruit new fighters from Pashtun villages in both Afghanistan and Pakistan to launch a renewed “jihad” against the Afghan government and the U.S-led coalition. Many Pakistani tribesmen from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) also joined the resistance as “small mobile training camps were established along the border with Pakistan by al Qaeda and Taliban fighters to train recruits in insurgent warfare and terrorist tactics.”³⁶

Upon reestablishing contact with his commanders, “Mullah Omar appointed a ten-man council known as the Quetta Shura (QS) or the Rahbari Shura (Supreme Taliban Shura) to coordinate strategy amongst the group.”³⁷ The QS consists of four regional military councils located in Quetta, Peshawar, Miramshah, and Gerdi Jangal, and

³² Mark Sedra, “The Forgotten War Shows No Sign of Abating,” http://fpif.org/the_forbidden_war_shows_no_sign_of_abating/ [accessed December 10 – April 1, 2003], 2.

³³ Thomas H. Johnson, “On the Edge of the Big Muddy,” 97

³⁴ Mark Sedra, “The Forgotten War Shows No Sign of Abating,” 2.

³⁵ Griff Witte, “Afghanistan War, “2001-Present,” 2.

³⁶ Ibid., 2.

³⁷ Bill Roggio, “The Afghan Taliban’s Top Leaders,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/02/the_talibans_top_lea.php [accessed September 3 – February 23, 2010], 1.

includes ten committees: Military, Finance, Political Affairs, Culture and Information, Interior Affairs, Prison and Refugees, Education Recruitment, Repatriation Committees, and the Ulema Council.³⁸

Figure 1: Taliban Regional Military Councils

QUETTA REGIONAL MILITARY SHURA	Leader: Hafez Majid Regions: Directs activities in southern and western Afghanistan
PESHAWAR REGIONAL MILITARY SHURA	Led by: Abdul Latif Mansur Regions: Directs activities in eastern and northeastern Afghanistan
MIRAMSHAH REGIONAL MILITARY SHURA	Led by: Siraj Haqqani Regions: Directs activities in southeastern Afghanistan, including the provinces of Paktika, Paktia, Khost, Logar, and Wardak
GERDI JANGAL REGIONAL MILITARY SHURA	Led by: Mullah Abdul Zakir Regions: Exclusive focus on Helmand and Nimroz Province

Source: Qazi, Shehzad H. “The Neo-Taliban,” p.7, http://www.ispu.org/files/PDFs/586_ISPU%20Report_Neo%20Taliban_Qazi_WEB.pdf.

Mullah Omar also appointed four senior commanders to reorganize the fighters in the southern provinces of Uruzgan, Helmand, Kandahar, and Zabul.³⁹ These were Mullah Baradar Akhund, Mullah Akhtar Mohammed Usmani, Mullah Dadullah, and Mullah Abdul Razzaq. “All four men had close links to bin Laden and were known for their belief in global jihad.”⁴⁰ In case he was captured or killed, Mullah Omar also appointed Usmani as his successor.⁴¹

In Afghanistan’s eastern Pashtun provinces the Taliban’s was headed by Saif ur-Rahman Mansur, Jalaluddin Haqqani, and his son, Sirajuddin Haqqani. They operated out

³⁸ Ibid.,1.

³⁹ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: How the War Against Islamic Extremism is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, (Penguin Books Limited, 2008), 241.

⁴⁰ Shehzad H. Qazi, “The Neo-Taliban, Counterinsurgency & the American Endgame in Afghanistan,” http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/586_ispu%20report_neo%20taliban_qazi_web.pdf [accessed December – February 2011], 7.

⁴¹ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, 241.

of Miramshah, in North Waziristan, one of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In the 1980s, Haqqani was a major recipient of CIA money and arms routed through the ISI.⁴²

After 9/11, “the ISI promoted Haqqani as a possible moderate Taliban, and he visited Islamabad under ISI protection to talk to the CIA, just before the U.S. invasion in October 2001.”⁴³ During the invasion, the ISI asked the U.S. not to bomb Haqqani’s tribal home of Khost, “saying that a deal with him was still possible, but Haqqani was a firm believer in al Qaeda.”⁴⁴ In 2002, U.S. SOF made at least three attempts to kill him, including bombing a mosque near his home, “an attempt that killed seventeen people-but he always seemed to be well tipped off before any U.S. attacks.”⁴⁵

Figure 2: Taliban Insurgent Groups

GROUP	LEADER	CURRENT LOCATION	AREAS OF OPERATION & SUPPORT IN AFGHANISTAN
Quetta Shura (QS)	Mullah Mohammad Omar Akhund	Quetta, Pakistan	Uruzgan, Zabul, Kandahar, and Helmand provinces
Hizb-e-Islami Gulbedin (HIG)	Gulbedin Hekmetyar	Bajaur Agency, Pakistan	Laghman, Kunar, Nuristan, Nangarhar, Paktia and Paktika
Haqqani Network (HN)	Sirajuddin Haqqni and Jalaluddin Haqqani	Miramshah in North Waziristan, Pakistan	Khowst, Logar, Wardak, Paktia, and Paktika

Source: Qazi, Shehzad H. “The Neo-Taliban,” p.7, http://www.ispu.org/files/PDFs/586_ISPU%20Report_

The Taliban received another boost when the Iranian government allowed Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to leave his exile in Meshed, Iran. “Hekmatyar and his group Hizb-i-Islami-Gulbuddin (HIG) received extensive U.S. support against the Soviet Union,

⁴² Jeffrey A. Dressler, “The Haqqani Network,” http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Haqqani_Network_0.pdf [accessed December 8 – October 2010], 1.

⁴³ Alex Strick van Linschoten & Felix Keuhn, “Separating the Taliban from al Qaeda,” 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁵ Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan 2002-2007*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 176

but turned against its *mujahedin* colleagues after the Communist government fell in 1992.”⁴⁶ The Taliban displaced HIG as the main opposition to the 1992-1996 Rabbani government.⁴⁷ After secret talks with the ISI in Dubai, Hekmatyar returned to Afghanistan or Peshawar, Pakistan in February 2002.⁴⁸ Shortly after returning to Afghanistan, the ISI allowed Hekmatyar to set up a base in the sprawling Shamshatoo refugee camp outside Peshawar, “where many of his former fighters lived.”⁴⁹ He became an ally of the Taliban and al Qaeda, “yet never fully merged with either unit.”⁵⁰

Throughout the fall and winter of 2002, hundreds of Taliban and foreign fighters began the long and dangerous journey back into Afghanistan. According to Ahmed Rashid (2008), the Taliban did not just slip back across the border in the winter of 2002/2003; “they arrived in droves, by bus, taxi, and tractor, on camels and horses, and on foot.”⁵¹ The Taliban also began to move weapons, ammunition, and food supplies in Afghanistan, adding to those stockpiles that they had stored away during their retreat in 2001. U.S. and Afghan forces began increasingly to unearth caches of new weapons. “In November alone they uncovered 475 large and small weapons caches. In one cache, 2,100 brand new AK 47 rifles were discovered along with 70,000 mortar shells and 43,000 rockets.”⁵²

Between 2004 and 2006, “Afghan groups developed a close relationship with Iraqi insurgent groups, who provided information on making and using various kinds of

⁴⁶ Global Security.Org, “Hizb-i-Islami (Islamic Party),” <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/hizbi-islami.htm>, [accessed February 18-February 16, 2014], 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁸ Understandingwar.com, “Hizb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG),” <http://www.understandingwar.org/hizb-i-islami-gulbuddin-hig> [accessed December 8 – October 2010], 2.

⁴⁹ Global Security.Org, “Hizb-i-Islami (Islamic Party),” 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁵¹ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, 241.

⁵² Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: American’s War in Afghanistan*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 91.

remote-controlled devices and timers.”⁵³ According to Brian Glyn Williams (2008), U.S. military leaders “noticed an increase in the use of Iraq-style IEDs in Afghanistan at this time”⁵⁴ as Islamic militants in Iraq “furnished information through the internet and face-to-face visits to the Taliban and other Afghan insurgent groups.”⁵⁵

By 2006, “a full-bodied insurgency had developed in Afghanistan as the Taliban stepped up attacks with IEDs, and suicide bombers, as well as assassinations and kidnappings.”⁵⁶ According to Seth G. Jones, “the overall number of insurgent-initiated attacks increased by 400 percent from 2002 to 2006, and the number of deaths from these attacks increased more than 800 during the same period.”⁵⁷ Many of the attacks were against Afghan government officials, though others targeted civilians and Coalition forces. “The number of suicide attacks also quadrupled, remotely detonated bombings more than doubled, and armed attacks nearly tripled.”⁵⁸

As the demands of combat grew, “differences between NATO allies over ‘caveats’ – restrictions placed by some European governments on the activities in which their troops were authorized to engage –became rancorous.”⁵⁹ According to David Auerswald and Stephen Saideman (2009), “there are between fifty and eighty known restrictions that constrain NATO commanders in Afghanistan.”⁶⁰ However, the number

⁵³ Brian Glyn Williams, “Mullah Omar’s Missiles: A Field Report on Suicide Bombers in Afghanistan,” <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/mullah-omars-missiles-field-report-suicide-bombers-afghanistan> [accessed December 23-Winter 2008], 5.

⁵⁴ Seth G. Jones, “The Rise of Afghanistan’s Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad,” *International Security* (Spring 2008), 35.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁸ Seth G. Jones, “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG595.pdf [accessed April 4-January 2008], 49.

⁵⁹ David P. Auerswald & Stephen M. Saideman, “NATO at War: Understanding the Challenges of Caveats in Afghanistan,” <http://www.aco.nato.int/resources/1/documents/NATO%20at%20War.pdf> [accessed December 23 – September 2009], 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

of informal and unstated caveats is not known.⁶¹ At least “one nation may not deploy its troops at night. At least one country’s force was not allowed to participate in missions alongside the troops from a historical rival.”⁶² Some U.S. soldiers began referring to ISAF by a range of derogatory names such as “I Suck at Fighting,” “I Saw Americans Fighting,” “I Sunbathe at FOBS.”⁶³ “The latter was a reference to the small, heavily fortified forward operating bases established in rural areas.”⁶⁴

Moreover, commanders on the ground “were contending with unrealistic demands from their capitals to promote reconstruction and development, which they were unable to execute because of the growing insurgency, and the absence of aid officials, who were deterred by the lack of security.”⁶⁵ American commanders had “access to substantial amounts of money that they could direct towards reconstruction projects, and were able to use these funds to advance tactical goals, but improvements that were made often could not be sustained.”⁶⁶

Frustrated with continued violence, in 2007, NATO settled on a more integrated strategy involving pre-emptive combat and improved governance.⁶⁷ During 2007, U.S. and ISAF forces, “bolstered by the infusion of 3,200 U.S. troops and 3,800 NATO/partner forces, pre-empted an anticipated Taliban ‘spring offensive’ with *Operation Achilles* (March 2007) to expel militants from the Sangin district of northern

⁶¹ David P. Auerswald & Stephen M. Saideman, “NATO at War: Understanding the Challenges of Caveats in Afghanistan,” 8.

⁶² Vincent Morelli & Paul Belkin, “NATO In Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance,” <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/112055.pdf> [accessed December 23 – April 17, 2009], 21.

⁶³ Anne Mulrine, “In Afghanistan, the NATO-led Force is ‘Underresourced’ For the Fight Against the Taliban,” *U.S. News*, June 5, 2008.

⁶⁴ Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, XXIV.

⁶⁵ Alexander Nicoll, “The Road to Lisbon,” in *Afghanistan to 2015 and Beyond*, ed. Toby Dodge & Nicholas Redman (New York: Routledge, 2011), 41.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶⁷ Alexander Nicoll, “The Road to Lisbon,” in *Afghanistan to 2015 and Beyond*, ed. Toby Dodge & Nicholas Redman (New York: Routledge, 2011), 41.

Helmand Province and the area around the key Kajaki dam.”⁶⁸ The Taliban “spring offensive” did not materialize.⁶⁹ The operations (including Operation Silicon), had a major success on May 12, 2007, “when the purportedly ruthless leader of the Taliban insurgency in the south, Mullah Dadullah, was killed by British Special Forces during a raid on a compound in the volatile Helmand province.”⁷⁰

To address “the widespread perception that the U.S. and NATO war effort in Afghanistan was failing,”⁷¹ the Bush administration concluded in early 2008 that the United States needed to focus more attention and resources on the Afghan situation than it had previously.⁷² Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Admiral Mike Mullen largely confirmed the view that the Afghan war was “under-resourced” in his December 11, 2007 testimony in which he stated that, in Iraq, “the United States does what it must, while in Afghanistan, the United States does what it can.”⁷³ Thus, in the first five months of 2008, the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan increased by over 80% with a surge of 21,643 more troops, bringing the total number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan from 26,607 in January to 48,250 in June.⁷⁴

By the end of 2008, there were over 65,000 U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan.⁷⁵ In another significant move, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates “approved a plan to place almost all U.S. troops, including those performing OEF anti-

⁶⁸ Ibid., 42.

⁶⁹ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: How the War Against Islamic Extremism is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, (Penguin Books Limited, 2008), 394.

⁷⁰ Kenneth Katzman, “Afghanistan: Post-War Governance Security, and U.S. Policy,” http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/crsreports/crsdocuments/RL30588_09102007.pdf [accessed January 18-September 10, 2007], 1.

⁷¹ Kenneth Katzman, “Afghanistan: Post-War Governance Security, and U.S. Policy,” <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/110749.pdf> [accessed January 18-September 29, 2008], 23.

⁷² Nathaniel C. Fick, & John A. Nagl, “Counterinsurgency Field Manual: Afghanistan Edition,” <http://www.cnas.org/node/648> [accessed January 18 - January 12, 2009], 1.

⁷³ Ibid., 1.

⁷⁴ John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, & John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back*, 211.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 211.

insurgent missions, under General David McKiernan's NATO/ISAF command, in order to create unity of command, and to improve flexibility of deployment of U.S. forces throughout the battlefield."⁷⁶

Despite these changes in U.S. and NATO strategy, support for the Taliban continued to grow as the group regained most of the territory it had lost in 2001. According to testimony provided by then-Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell to the Senate, "by the end of 2008, the Karzai government controlled only 30% of the country, while the Taliban controlled 10%, and tribes and local groups controlled the remainder."⁷⁷ Like the mujahideen during the Afghan-Soviet war, the Taliban controlled the countryside while the government controlled the towns.⁷⁸

Moreover, "3,276 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) detonated or were detected before blowing up in Afghanistan in 2008."⁷⁹ This was a 45% increase compared to 2007."⁸⁰ The number of troops killed by bombs also more than doubled in 2008 from 75 to 161.⁸¹ "The number of Taliban-related incidents per day also jumped by almost 50 percent, as Afghanistan experienced 18.4 attacks per day in 2008 compared to 12.4 in 2007."⁸² Thus, by the end of 2008 a new strategy was needed to pull Afghanistan back from the brink of failure.

A New Strategy is Needed: January-December 2009

When President Obama took office in January 2009, domestic opinion in the

⁷⁶ Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-War Governance Security, and U.S. Policy," 24.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁸ Ali Ahmad Jalali, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*, (Quantico: U.S. Marine Corps Studies, 1995), 211.

⁷⁹ Tom Vanden Brook, "Coalition Deaths from IED Attacks Soar in Afghanistan," http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/military/2009-03-08-IED_N.htm [accessed December 23 – March 9, 2009], 1.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁸¹ Chris Radin & Bill Roggio, "Afghanistan: Mapping the Rising Violence," http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/08/afghanistan_mapping.php [accessed December 23 – August 5, 2008], 4.

⁸² Ibid., 4.

United States and Europe was turning against the war. “High unemployment rates and budget cutbacks at home, coupled with the deteriorating security in Afghanistan and Hamid Karzai’s flawed August 2009 reelection, soured Americans on the huge investment Washington had made in the Afghan war.”⁸³ Over a thousand U.S. soldiers had been killed, thousands more wounded, and \$120.9 billion had been spent since 2001.⁸⁴ “Many questioned whether it was worth sacrificing more lives and money on the deadlocked eight-year-long conflict.”⁸⁵ A poll conducted three months after Obama’s inauguration on April 25, 2009, showed that only 43 percent of Americans thought the Afghan war was worth fighting.⁸⁶ “The disappointing trends in Afghanistan suggested that the percentage of Americans opposing the Afghan war would only grow.”⁸⁷

During the 2008 Presidential Election, “then-Senator Barack Obama repeatedly said the real front of the war against terrorists was on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and not in Iraq.”⁸⁸ Moreover, he believed “that the war in Afghanistan had been under-resourced and marginalized in the five years since the invasion of Iraq.”⁸⁹ Having campaigned on ending the war in Iraq, the new administration was aware that, within a year, the American public and media would consider the Afghan war “Obama’s war.”⁹⁰ Thus, Obama and his cabinet needed to come up with a strategy that would break the Taliban’s momentum, and produce success before the 2012 general elections.

Shortly after being sworn in, Obama immediately dispatched 17,000 more troops

⁸³ Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 654

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 654.

⁸⁵ Richard J. Kilroy Jr. “Obama’s Wars, Bob Woodward, <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1110&context=jss> [December 30 - Summer 2011], 2.

⁸⁶ Peyton M. Craighill, “Poll: Differing Views on Iraq and Afghanistan Wars,” <http://abcnews.go.com/PollingUnit/story?id=8136983> [December 30 – July 21, 2009], 2.

⁸⁷ Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 654

⁸⁸ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus,” 4.

⁸⁹ Richard J. Kilroy Jr. “Obama’s Wars, Bob Woodward,” 2.

⁹⁰ Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 654

to add to the 36,000 Americans already deployed in Afghanistan, and ordered a strategy review of the conduct of the war. Picked to lead this review was Bruce Riedel, a retired CIA analyst “who possessed a deep knowledge of terrorist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan and had recently published a book about al Qaeda in South Asia.”⁹¹ Upon arriving in Washington, Riedel and his team immediately began work on coming up with policy recommendations for the review which soon became known as “AfPak.”

Findings from the AfPak review started to become public on March 27th as Obama stated that the core goal of any new U.S. strategy would be to “disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan.”⁹² Other recommendations made by the Riedel review included “the need to shift strategic focus to Pakistan—a country with a Muslim population of 180 million, an increasingly volatile and destructive insurgency of its own, and a military with an ever-growing number of nuclear weapons.”⁹³ At the same time, “progress in Afghanistan was clearly linked to progress in Pakistan and vice versa.”⁹⁴ Thirdly, the review did not set the defeat of the Taliban as an objective. Rather, “it said that the Taliban’s momentum must be reversed.”⁹⁵ In order to achieve these objectives, Riedel and his team argued that a fully resourced civil-military counterinsurgency strategy was needed.⁹⁶

On May 11th, President Obama made another unexpected move by firing General David McKiernan, then the U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan.⁹⁷ Believing “that a new commander was needed to implement the administration’s new AfPak

⁹¹ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus,” 6.

⁹² Ibid. 6.

⁹³ Alexander Nicoll, “The Road to Lisbon,” 43

⁹⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁹⁵ John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, & John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back*, 227.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 228.

⁹⁷ Ann Scoot Tyson, “Gen. David McKiernan Ousted as Top U.S. Commander in Afghanistan,” *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2009.

strategy,”⁹⁸ Obama followed the advice of Defense Secretary Robert Gates and the Joint Chiefs of Staff by appointing Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the former commander of Special Operations in Iraq. Even though the president had only met the general briefly and knew very little about him, “the Pentagon believed that McChrystal was the right man for the job due to his unique skill set in counterinsurgency.”⁹⁹

“Having embraced counterinsurgency doctrine “with the zeal of a convert,”¹⁰⁰ McChrystal was “determined to place his personal stamp on Afghanistan.”¹⁰¹ Upon arriving in Kabul in June 2009, “McChrystal and his team set about changing the culture of ISAF by banning alcohol on all NATO bases, kicking out Burger King and other symbols of American excess, and threatening to turn the one piece of greenery at NATO headquarters in Kabul into a shooting range.”¹⁰² Even though few could argue with the appointment of Stanley McChrystal and the policy recommendations made by the Riedel review, many felt that the central “CT versus COIN” debate was far from being fully resolved. Thus, months of political wrangling lay ahead on what strategy the Obama administration should implement.¹⁰³

The McChrystal Assessment

One of the most important options being considered by the Obama administration during the fall of 2009 was a classified 66-page assessment written by General Stanley McChrystal on the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan. “Seen by many as a searing indictment of American-led NATO military operations and a corrupt Afghan

⁹⁸ John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, & John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back*, 229.

⁹⁹ Ann Scoot Tyson, “Gen. David McKiernan Ousted as Top U.S. Commander in Afghanistan,” 1..

¹⁰⁰ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus,” 6

¹⁰¹ Michael Hastings, “The Runaway General: The Rolling Stone profile of Stanley McChrystal that changed history,” <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-runaway-general-20100622> [accessed January 10-June 22, 2010], 3.

¹⁰² Ibid., 3.

¹⁰³ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus,” 6.

civilian government, pitted against a surprisingly adaptive and increasingly dangerous insurgency,”¹⁰⁴ McChrystal’s report and recommendations met both support and criticism when delivered to senior policy makers on August 30.

Even though the assessment was conducted in response to a formal directive issued by SECDEF Gates on June 26, 2009,

“many White House officials, including Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel and senior political advisor David Axelrod, saw it as a brazen attempt to reopen the ‘COIN versus CT’ debate in order to influence the resourcing for a much broader population-centric COIN campaign that moved Afghanistan back to the centerpiece of the overarching strategy.”¹⁰⁵

Moreover, these officials believed that the “military was trying to box the president in and force him to commit to significant troop increases in Afghanistan.”¹⁰⁶

Despite these suspicions, “very few could argue with the report’s findings which warned that Failure to gain the initiative and reverse insurgent momentum in the near-term (next 12 months) -- while Afghan security capacity matures -- risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible.”¹⁰⁷ The assessment also offers a harsh critique of the Afghan government, arguing that corruption is as much a threat to Afghanistan as the insurgency is.¹⁰⁸ “The weakness of state institutions, malign actions of power-brokers, widespread corruption and abuse of power by various officials, and ISAF’s own errors, have given Afghans little reason to support their government.”¹⁰⁹ The result has been a “crisis of confidence among Afghans,” McChrystal writes. “Further, a

¹⁰⁴ Eric Schmitt, “In Afghanistan Assessment, a Catalyst for Obama,” *New York Times*, September 21, 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Mark Emmott, “Gates: Obama Made Solid Decisions,” 2.

¹⁰⁶ Peter Baker, “How Obama Came to Plan for ‘Surge’ in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, December 5, 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Stanley McChrystal, “Commander’s Initial Assessment.” http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf [January 13 – August 30, 2009], 1-2.

¹⁰⁸ Bob Woodward, “McChrystal: More Forces or ‘Mission Failure,’” *The Washington Post*, September 21, 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Stanley McChrystal, “Commander’s Initial Assessment,” 2-4.

perception that our resolve is uncertain makes Afghans reluctant to align with us against the insurgents.”¹¹⁰

General McChrystal is equally critical of the U.S. led NATO military alliance that he had led since June 15. According to him, the key weakness of U.S. and Coalition forces is that they are not defending the Afghan population aggressively enough.

“Pre-occupied with protection of our own forces, we have operated in a manner that distances us – physically and psychologically – from the people we seek to protect ... The insurgents cannot defeat us militarily; but we can defeat ourselves. ISAF does not sufficiently appreciate the dynamics in the local communities, nor how the insurgency, corruption, incompetent officials, power-brokers, and criminality all combine to affect the Afghan population.”¹¹¹

The general also notes that “coalition intelligence-gathering has focused on how to attack insurgents, hindering ISAF’s comprehension of the critical aspects of Afghan society.”¹¹²

At the end of his report, McChrystal outlines a plan to implement a fully resourced population-centric counterinsurgency strategy that would reverse the Taliban’s momentum and allow the Afghan government to control these contested territories.¹¹³ He also makes one last plea that his command must be bolstered if failure is to be averted. “ISAF requires more forces,”¹¹⁴ he states. “Failure to provide adequate resources also risks a longer conflict, greater casualties, high overall costs, and ultimately, a critical loss of political support. Any of these risks, in turn, are likely to result in mission failure.”¹¹⁵

The public airing of a leaked copy of General McChrystal’s analysis on September 21 by Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post* did not come at a good time for

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 2-10.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 2-10.

¹¹² Ibid., 2-10.

¹¹³ Bob Woodward, “McChrystal: More Forces or ‘Mission Failure,’” 2.

¹¹⁴ Stanley McChrystal, “Commander’s Initial Assessment,” 2-21.

¹¹⁵ Stanley McChrystal, “Commander’s Initial Assessment,” 2-21.

the Obama administration.¹¹⁶ Afghans had just gone to the polls a month earlier on August 20th and “the election was seen by many as flawed, manipulated, and illegitimate.”¹¹⁷ Thus, the election raised serious questions as to whether or not there was a legitimate Afghan government for the United States to support.

The 2009 Strategy Review: The Afghan Surge

The remainder of the fall of 2009 would be used for the second major Afghan strategy review of the year. The president and the NSC staff directed the review. The purpose of these review sessions was to debate the pros and cons of a fully-resourced counterinsurgency campaign versus counterterrorism-centric.¹¹⁸ There was also a third strategy called “counterterrorism plus,” by its strongest proponent Vice President Joe Biden.¹¹⁹ The issue of troop levels remained undecided throughout this period as well.¹²⁰

The first meeting with the president took place on September 13th as Obama posed a series of questions:

“Does America need to defeat the Taliban in order to defeat al Qaeda as well? Can a counterinsurgency strategy work in Afghanistan given the problems with its government? If the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan would a nuclear-armed Pakistan be next?”¹²¹

This skepticism was reinforced by Vice President Biden, who expressed opposition to an expansive strategy requiring a big troop increase.¹²²

Instead, Biden proposed an alternative strategy dubbed “counterterrorism plus.”¹²³

This approach boiled down to retaining the massive American bases at Bagram and

¹¹⁶ Peter Bergen, *The Longest War*, 321.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹¹⁸ Peter Baker, “How Obama Came to Plan for ‘Surge’ in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, December 5, 2009.

¹¹⁹ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus,” 79.

¹²⁰ John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, & John K. Wood, *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back*, 245.

¹²¹ Peter Baker, “How Obama Came to Plan for ‘Surge’ in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, December 5, 2009.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 5.

Kandahar, which would allow SOF teams to raid anywhere in the country, improving the quality of training Afghan forces and expanding reconciliation efforts to peel off some Taliban fighters. The problem with this plan was that “it did not clarify how such a policy would substantially differ from what George W. Bush’s policy of maintaining a light footprint approach and pursuing a counterterrorism mission.”¹²⁴

According to Bob Woodward’s 2010 book, *Obama’s Wars*, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (General James Cartwright), went behind the back of his boss Admiral Mike Mullen “who despised the counterterrorism option.”¹²⁵ Against Mullen’s objections, Cartwright worked up numbers for Biden that “showed that it would take an additional twenty thousand soldiers to execute counterterrorism plus: half of them Special Forces to hunt insurgents, and half of them trainers to build up the Afghan army.”¹²⁶ The president never seemed to have seriously considered this approach.¹²⁷

Tensions between the military and the Obama administration reached a new high on October 1, when General McChrystal made it clear during a public appearance that he “believed a policy in Afghanistan that focused largely on counterterrorism, Biden’s preferred option, would lead to failure.”¹²⁸ He also said that “success required a full-blown counterinsurgency strategy.”¹²⁹ White House officials were furious upon learning about the statement as “National Security Advisor, Jim Jones, shortly called Admiral Mullen after learning about the comments and told him that McChrystal’s speech was

¹²³ Ibid., 5.

¹²⁴ Peter Bergen, “The General’s War,” <http://www.newrepublic.com/book/review/the-generals-victory-obamas-wars-woodward> [January 7 – December 6, 2010], 4.

¹²⁵ Peter Baker, “Woodward Book Says Afghanistan Divided White House,” *New York Times*, September 21, 2010

¹²⁶ Peter Bergen, “The General’s War,” 4.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹²⁸ John F. Burns, “McChrystal Rejects Scaling Down Afghan Military Aims,” *The New York Times*, October 1, 2009.

¹²⁹ Bob Woodward. *Obama’s Wars*, 180.

insubordinate and stupid.”¹³⁰ The president quickly “summoned McChrystal to Denmark- where he was receiving the Nobel Peace Prize at the time – and gave the general what one can only assume was something of a Whiskey Tango Foxtrot moment.”¹³¹

The episode “underscored the uneasy relationship between the military and a new president, who aides said, was determined not be as deferential as he believed his predecessor, George W. Bush, was for years in Iraq.”¹³² The military on the other hand, “needed to adjust to a less experienced but a more skeptical commander in chief.”¹³³ The military also saw “Obama in the same light as his democratic predecessor in the White House, Bill Clinton, a lightweight on foreign policy with no real understanding of war-fighting.”¹³⁴ Moreover, commanders such as David Petraeus trusted very few of Obama’s civilian political advisors, especially senior political advisor David Axelrod, who they believed to be “a complete spin doctor.”¹³⁵

On October 9th, President Obama and his national security team began to review the troop levels proposed by General McChrystal that would be needed to reverse the Taliban’s momentum.¹³⁶ The first option was “a further eleven thousand trainers to build up the Afghan army; the second option was forty thousand more soldiers through 2013; and the last an additional 85,000.”¹³⁷ McChrystal, Petraeus, and Mullen all understood that the first and third options were not going to go over well.¹³⁸ “The first did not suffice to make much of a difference in disrupting the Taliban, while the third was politically out

¹³⁰ Michael Hastings, *The Operators: The Wild and Terrifying Inside Story of America’s War in Afghanistan*, (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2012), 143

¹³¹ Peter Bergen, “The General’s War,” 4..

¹³² Peter Baker, “How Obama Came to Plan for ‘Surge’ in Afghanistan,” 7.

¹³³ Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus,” 79.

¹³⁴ Bob Woodward, *Obama’s Wars*, 81.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 81.

¹³⁶ Peter Baker, “How Obama Came to Plan for ‘Surge’ in Afghanistan,” 7.

¹³⁷ Peter Bergen, “The General’s War,” 4.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 4.

of the question.”¹³⁹ As before, many White House officials were skeptical and had many misgivings about sending more American forces to Afghanistan.¹⁴⁰ According to Peter Baker of the *New York Times*, one senior official asked in an interview: “Why wasn’t there a 25 number. He then answered his own question: It would have been too tempting.”¹⁴¹ Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, the point person at the National Security Council for Afghanistan under both Bush and Obama, is quoted as saying that “I can’t tell you that the prospect here for success is very high.”¹⁴²

The only members of the president’s national security team that seemed in favor of a counterinsurgency strategy and a large increase of American forces was Robert Gates and Hillary Clinton. According to one member of McChrystal’s inner circle, “Hillary had Stan’s back during the strategic review.”¹⁴³ Like Clinton, Secretary Gates was also sympathetic to General McChrystal’s request. Initially, “Gates was skeptical of any troop increase, but two things had changed his mind by late summer.”¹⁴⁴ The first was an article in *The Weekly Standard* called “We’re Not the Soviets in Afghanistan,” written by Fred Kagan (who had made the case for the surge in Iraq).¹⁴⁵ In his article, Kagan noted that the Soviets had rolled in with brute force, their arsenals contained no precision weapons, and their soldiers had no experience in COIN.¹⁴⁶ The second was the 66-page classified report written by McChrystal.¹⁴⁷

On October 22nd, the National Security Council produced a ‘consensus memo,’

¹³⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Baker, “Woodward Book Says Afghanistan Divided White House,” 2.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴² Ibid., 2.

¹⁴³ Michael Hastings, “The Runaway General,” 4.

¹⁴⁴ Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 309.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 309.

¹⁴⁶ Fred W Kagan, “We’re Not the Soviets in Afghanistan,” 1.

¹⁴⁷ Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*, 309.

that concluded that “the United States should focus on diminishing the Taliban insurgency, but not destroying it; building up certain critical ministries; and transferring authority to Afghan security forces.”¹⁴⁸ With still no consensus on the number of troops that should be sent to Afghanistan, Obama met with Secretaries Clinton and Gates on October 26th to gauge their feelings about a possible troop surge. Both of them expressed support for General McChrystal’s request for 40,000 troops or something close to it. Despite Clinton’s and Gates’s support for a fully-resourced counterinsurgency strategy, Obama remained wary of committing a significant number of troops.¹⁴⁹

Four days later on October 30th, Obama met with the Joint Chiefs and emphasized the need for speed to break the Taliban’s momentum. “Why can’t I get the troops in faster he asked?”¹⁵⁰ If they were going to do this, he concluded, “it only made sense to do this quickly, to have impact and keep the war from dragging on forever.”¹⁵¹ Having an a better idea of what the president was asking for, Secretary Gates began coming up with a plan that would make up the differences in the number of troops to be sent to Afghanistan and for how long they would be deployed there.¹⁵² The plan, called Option 2A was presented to Obama on November 11 and gave McChrystal the bulk of his request.”¹⁵³ Upon learning of this option, the president reportedly complained that it would take too long to get the troops in Afghanistan. “What I’m looking for is a surge. This has to be a surge.”¹⁵⁴

This statement represented a stark contrast from when Obama was a senator. In

¹⁴⁸ Peter Baker, “How Obama Came to Plan for ‘Surge’ in Afghanistan,” 9.

¹⁴⁹ Peter Baker. “Woodward Book Says Afghanistan Divided White House,” 1.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵² Ibid., 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵⁴ Bob Woodward. *Obama’s Wars*, 317.

2007, then-Senator Obama staunchly opposed President Bush's buildup in Iraq and questioned the effectiveness of a COIN based strategy in Iraq. Thus, "the president was hoping that the same strategy that helped to save Iraq led by the same general (Petraeus) could once again snatch strategic victory from the jaws of defeat, this time in Afghanistan."¹⁵⁵ However, unlike the Bush plan, Mr. Obama wanted from the start to speed up a withdrawal as well.

By the beginning of November, the idea of some sort of time frame was starting to take on momentum.¹⁵⁶ Shortly before Hamid Karzai's inauguration to a second term, Secretary of State Clinton met with him to suggest that he use his speech to outline a schedule for taking over security of the country.¹⁵⁷ Upon hearing about this suggestion, Karzai was "more than enthusiastic."¹⁵⁸ On the evening of November 23rd, the president gathered his team to present a revised version of Option 2A, this one titled "Max Leverage," pushing 30,000 troops into Afghanistan by mid-2010 and beginning to pull them out by July 2010. "As a quid pro quo for securing a substantial troop increase, Obama told military officials that they had to get troops in Afghanistan quickly and out before the 2013 drawdown date they had originally proposed."¹⁵⁹ The July 2011 withdrawal date was also designed by Obama officials "to send a signal to the American public that the commitment to Afghanistan was not an open-ended one."¹⁶⁰

Upon learning about this revised plan, many Pentagon officials, including Petraeus and McChrystal, had misgivings about setting a time frame for withdrawal,

¹⁵⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan, and Afghanistan*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), 108.

¹⁵⁶ Peter Baker, "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan," 11.

¹⁵⁷ Anne E. Kornbult, Scott Wilson, & Karen DeYong, "Obama Pressed for Faster Surge," *The Washington Post*, December 6, 2009.

¹⁵⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Pakistan on the Brink*, 108.

¹⁵⁹ Peter Bergen, "The General's Victory, 6.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

“fearing that it would be used by Taliban leaders to boost their fighters’ morale.”¹⁶¹ Thus, Secretary Gates countered with a “withdrawal” date of July, 2011 to bridge over the differences between the Pentagon and the White House.¹⁶²

Most of the president’s advisors and military staff concurred with the plan. The only one to have deep reservations about it was Joe Biden, who once again expressed skepticism about any plan that required more troops. On November 29, Obama summoned his national security team to the White House to announce his decision. Having finally decided on a strategy, the president announced that he would send 30,000 troops as quickly as possible, and then begin the withdrawal in July 2011. “In deference to Gates’s concerns, the pace and endpoint of the withdrawal would be determined by conditions at the time.”¹⁶³ Having secured the support of his advisors, Obama then called General McChrystal and Ambassador Karl Eikenberry to make them aware of his decision.

Two days later on December 1, 2009, Obama finally announced his decision during a speech at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. In his 33-minute address, the president set out a strategy that would send thirty thousand additional troops to Afghanistan to reverse Taliban gains in large parts of the country, increase the pressure on Afghan authorities to build its own military capacity and a more effective government, and step up attacks on al Qaeda in Pakistan.¹⁶⁴ He also delivered a pointed message to Afghan President Hamid Karzai, saying, “the days of providing a blank check are over and that the United States could not afford and should not have to

¹⁶¹ Peter Baker, “How Obama Came to Plan for ‘Surge’ in Afghanistan,” 10.

¹⁶² Ibid., 6.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁶⁴ Ewen Macskill, “Barack Obama’s War: The Final Push in Afghanistan,” *The Guardian*, December 1, 2009.

shoulder an open-ended commitment.”¹⁶⁵ Thus, Obama, vowed to start bringing Americans troops home during the fall of 2011.

¹⁶⁵ Ewen Macskill, “Barack Obama’s War: The Final Push in Afghanistan,” *The Guardian*, December 1, 2009.

CHAPTER IV: SECURING AFGHANISTAN'S POPULATION AND BORDERS

“You can surge troops, but you can't surge trust.” – MG Larry D. Nicholson

One of the main goals of the counterinsurgency strategy implemented by Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus was to win over the “hearts and minds” of the Afghan people by securing the population. According to *FM 3-24*, counterinsurgency is a contest between insurgents and the government for control and the support of the population.¹ One of the “manual’s core assumptions is that the main challenge facing counterinsurgents is not killing their opponents, but rather finding them in the first place.”² Thus, counterinsurgent forces must win over the support of the people and “protect any informants who come forward with information that is useful in locating the enemy.”³

In order to protect the population, counterinsurgents must be able to control key terrain, “both natural and man-made, in and around major urban areas, as well as the border regions between neighboring countries.”⁴ Counterinsurgents must also be able to achieve increased levels of security and isolate enemy forces.⁵ Unfortunately, there is no simple metric or easy way for determining the number of troops needed to win a counterinsurgency campaign.

¹ U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, (Washington: Department of Defense, 2006), 1-1.

² Jeffrey A. Friedman, “Manpower and Counterinsurgency: Empirical Foundations for Theory and Practice,” <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09636412.2011.625768> [accessed January 20 - November 29, 2011], 558.

³ *Ibid.*, 558.

⁴ Hugh D. Blair “Challenges With Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan” <http://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=701363> [accessed January 19 – February 28, 2011], 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

Upon review, “*Field Manual 3-24* recommends that force requirements should be measured in terms of “troop density”, or the ratio between counterinsurgents and local inhabitants in the area of operations (AO).”¹ According to Paragraph 1-67 of *FM 3-24*,

“No predetermined, fixed ratio of friendly troops to enemy combatants ensures success in [counterinsurgency] A better force requirement gauge is troop density, the ratio of security forces (including the host nation’s military and police forces as well as foreign counterinsurgents) to inhabitants. Most density recommendations fall within a range of 20 to 25 counterinsurgents for every 1,000 residents in an [area of operations]. Twenty counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density required for effective [counterinsurgency] operations; however, as with any fixed ratio, such calculations remain very dependent on the situation.”²

Based off this ratio, a counterinsurgent force of 725,000 troops would be needed to secure Afghanistan’s population of 29 million people.³ This is a number five times higher than the number of troops on the ground during the peak of the surge in the summer of 2011.⁴

At first look, it would appear that the U.S. COIN strategy implemented by Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus does not meet the minimum troop density level requirements recommended by *FM 3-24*. However, as mentioned above, “any fixed troop ratio remains very dependent on the situation.”⁵ Factors such as the security situation on the ground, available manpower & resources, and availability of native security forces can help offset the number of troops needed to secure the population.⁶ Using *FM 3-24* as a guideline, the beginning part of this chapter will compare troop density levels before, during, and after the surge to determine whether the

¹ Jeffrey A. Friedman, “Manpower and Counterinsurgency,” 7.

² Steven M. Goode, “A Historical Basis for Force Requirements in Counterinsurgency,” <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/articles/09winter/goode.pdf> [accessed January 20 – Winter 2009-2010], 46.

³ Hugh D. Blair “Challenges With Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan,” 8.

⁴ Jeffrey A. Friedman, “Manpower and Counterinsurgency,” 560.

⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 1-68.

⁶ Steven M. Goode, “A Historical Basis for Force Requirements in Counterinsurgency,” 49.

U.S.'s counterinsurgency and accompanying surge strategy satisfy the minimum troop density level requirements advocated by *FM 3-24*.

This chapter will also compare troop density levels before, during, and after the surge to those of other recent counterinsurgency campaigns to see where Afghanistan places among the operations that succeeded and those that did not. Since current U.S. doctrine on force requirements is based off recent American and European COIN and nation-building operations,⁷ this study utilized the 22 case studies used by James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, and et. in their 2008 study, *Europe's Role in Nation-Building: From the Balkans to the Congo*. The first volume compares inputs and outcomes for eight U.S.-led nation-building missions: Germany, Japan, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The second compares inputs and outcomes for those original eight cases plus eight more UN-led nation-building missions: the Belgian Congo, Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, Eastern Slavonia, Sierra Leone, and East Timor. The final volume incorporates the data from those cases with findings from the European and Australian cases of Congo, Bosnia, the Balkans, and the Solomon Islands. Thus, the incorporation of data from these previous studies yields a total of 22 case studies from which to draw, with some overlap. For instance, there are two Congo cases, the UN effort in the 1960s and the UN – and European-led effort in the current decade.

While the focus of Dobbins's study is nation-building not troop density, its compilation of troop densities from recent U.S. and European counterinsurgency and

⁷ Glenn E. Kozelka, "Boots on the Ground: A Historical and Contemporary Analysis of Force Levels for Counterinsurgency Operations," http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dtic.mil%2Fcgi-bin%2FGetTRDoc%3FAD%3Dada505239&ei=AS_WVL_qG477gwSL3IK4AQ&usg=AFQjCNHtfmqZ8icc0U6NW NeVGAwqlhIs9w&bvm=bv.85464276,d.eXY [accessed January 30-April 7, 2009], 8.

contingency operations gives a way of comparing troop numbers in Afghanistan before, during and after the surge to those of other successful and unsuccessful COIN/contingency operations. Comparing these cases also allows us to see if they meet the force level requirements recommended by *FM 3-24*, and where troop density levels before, during, and after the surge in Afghanistan rank amongst them. As noted earlier, there is no simple metric for determining how many troops are needed to secure a population, as *FM 3-24* makes it very clear that such calculations remain very dependent on the situation.⁸ Moreover, “there is no consensus among previous studies whether indigenous forces should be included in the total number of troops deployed in support of specific operations.”⁹

One major component of *FM 3-24* Paragraph 1-67 is that counterinsurgent security forces include U.S. military, foreign military, and host nation military and police forces.¹⁰ This is in contrast with James Dobbins’s study as well as John McGrath’s 2006 study, *Boots on the Ground: Troop Density in Contingency Operations*. According to Dobbins and his team, international troops and police are essential to establishing security after a major war.¹¹ “Often, in the immediate aftermath of civil or inter-state conflict, states will undergo a period of anarchy in which groups and factions seek to arm themselves for protection.”¹² Thus, as pointed out by Seth G. Jones (2008), large numbers of troops and police are needed for defeating and deterring these groups. “These

⁸ Ibid., 1-68.

⁹ John J. McGrath, “Boots on the Ground: Troop Density in Contingency Operations,” www.dtic.mil/2Fcgibin/2FGetTRDoc%3FAD%3DADA456584&ei=8ibWVIqjDc7IsAT4lYGYBA&usg=AFQjCNEcXEDoHWQRJ8WPnuFB4FnwQNAiGw [accessed January 30-December 2006], 94.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 1-13.

¹¹ James Dobbins, “America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq,” http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1753/MR1753.pref.pdf [accessed January 20 – February 2004], 7.

¹² Barry Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,” as seen in Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America’s War in Afghanistan*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 118.

forces are also needed for general law-enforcement functions such as crowd control, patrolling borders, securing roads, and policing the streets.”¹³

Even though it is “possible to distinguish between local and intervening security forces,”¹⁴ *Field Manual 3-24* highlights the importance of training Host Nation (HN) security forces and including them in counterinsurgency operations. Despite being better trained and equipped, “intervening forces such as the U.S usually do not possess the language skills and cultural familiarity that local forces can provide.”¹⁵ Local residents are also usually more willing to work with native forces because they are not as suspicious as foreign soldiers. Thus, local security forces are critical in winning the “hearts and minds” of the people as well as securing the population.¹⁶

For the purposes of this study, force levels will be measured by manpower only, not by quality or role. As pointed out by Steven Goode (2009), “clearly different forces in a given conflict can vary widely in effectiveness due to variations in their training, motivation, leadership, equipment, level of corruption, and other factors.”¹⁷ What is much more difficult is comparing forces across conflicts in a consistent manner.¹⁸ Thus, in accordance with doctrine and previous studies, this analysis will use total military strength for all cases.

Finally, this chapter will also take a look at U.S. and ISAF efforts to secure Afghanistan’s border with Pakistan, which poses a major challenge to counterinsurgency in that country. “The Pakistani government has traditionally enjoyed only limited control

¹³ Robert M. Perito, *Where is the Lone Ranger When We Need Him? America’s Search for a Postconflict Stability Force* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) in Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America’s War in Afghanistan*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 118.

¹⁴ Steven M. Goode, “A Historical Basis for Force Requirements in Counterinsurgency,” 49.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 1-13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

over the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) that border Afghanistan.”¹⁹ American and ISAF officials have noted that cross-border attacks ‘have yielded big operational and tactical benefits—by causing the insurgent networks to feel disconnected, and prompting local residents in Pakistan to want al Qaeda and other outsiders to leave their communities.’²⁰

From 2007-2011, U.S. forces conducted numerous counterinsurgency operations in an attempt to win over the local tribes’ support and built small outposts to stem the flow of foreign fighters coming in from Pakistan’s FATA.²¹ In the fall of 2011, “U.S. troops were withdrawn from the region, after it was determined that their presence there only antagonized the locals and led them to carry out attacks on U.S. patrols and to attack U.S. combat outposts (COP).”²² Hence, this area “has resulted in some of the most deadly tactical defeats suffered by U.S. forces anywhere in the country with little or no strategic value.”²³

Did the U.S. Possess the Necessary Troop Density Level to Secure the Population

In order to secure the population, the U.S.’s COIN strategy relied on a basic tenant of counterinsurgency operations borrowed and adapted from Vietnam and more recently Iraq, “clear, hold, and build.” Done successfully, “clear-hold-build” allows the HN government to increase the territory under its control.²⁴ “According to the most common simile, government control spreads like oil or ink-spots across absorbent

¹⁹ Shuja Nawaz, “Meeting the Challenge of Militancy and Terror in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan,” http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/081218_nawaz_fata_web.pdf [accessed January 19-January 2009], 11.

²⁰ Kristen E. Boon, Aziz Huq, Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., *Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Conflict in Afghanistan*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 10.

²¹ Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified*, 60.

²² *Ibid.*, 60.

²³ Hugh D. Blair “Challenges With Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan” <http://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=701363> [accessed January 19 – February 28, 2011], 11.

²⁴ Colin H. Kahl, “COIN of the Realm.” 170.

paper.”²⁵

In the spring of 2011, ISAF Headquarters identified 121 districts out of 400 Afghan districts whose control would provide a marked advantage over the enemy.²⁶ Out of the 121 districts, 80 were designated as “key terrain” while the other 41 were assessed as “areas of interest.”²⁷ Control of these districts would allow the U.S. to achieve its goal of being able to secure and protect the Afghan people. Thus, most of the 30,000 surge troops initially sent to Afghanistan would be deployed to populated areas around Kandahar City as well as in Helmand province. This would be the main effort of the U.S.’s counterinsurgency strategy as the goal would be to protect the population from Taliban insurgents and clearing them from key population areas. ANSF forces would then be used to hold the cleared areas and prevent the Taliban from returning.

Next, a smaller number of troops would be sent to the eastern region of Afghanistan. With insufficient troops for a COIN strategy in the area, a counterterrorism strategy would be implemented instead. Thus, Coalition forces would attack fighters from the Haqqani Network instead of clearing population areas. “The goal of this second phase was to “wear down Haqqani Network fighters, leaders, and infrastructure, rendering them less capable of operations.”²⁸ This, in turn, “would halt their momentum and prevent them from spreading into neighboring provinces and, most importantly, the capital city of Kabul.”²⁹

²⁵ David Ucko, “Clear-Hold-Build-Fail? Rethinking Local-Level Counterinsurgency,” <http://warontherocks.com/2013/11/clear-hold-build-fail-rethinking-local-level-counterinsurgency/> [accessed January 21 – November 7, 2013], 1.

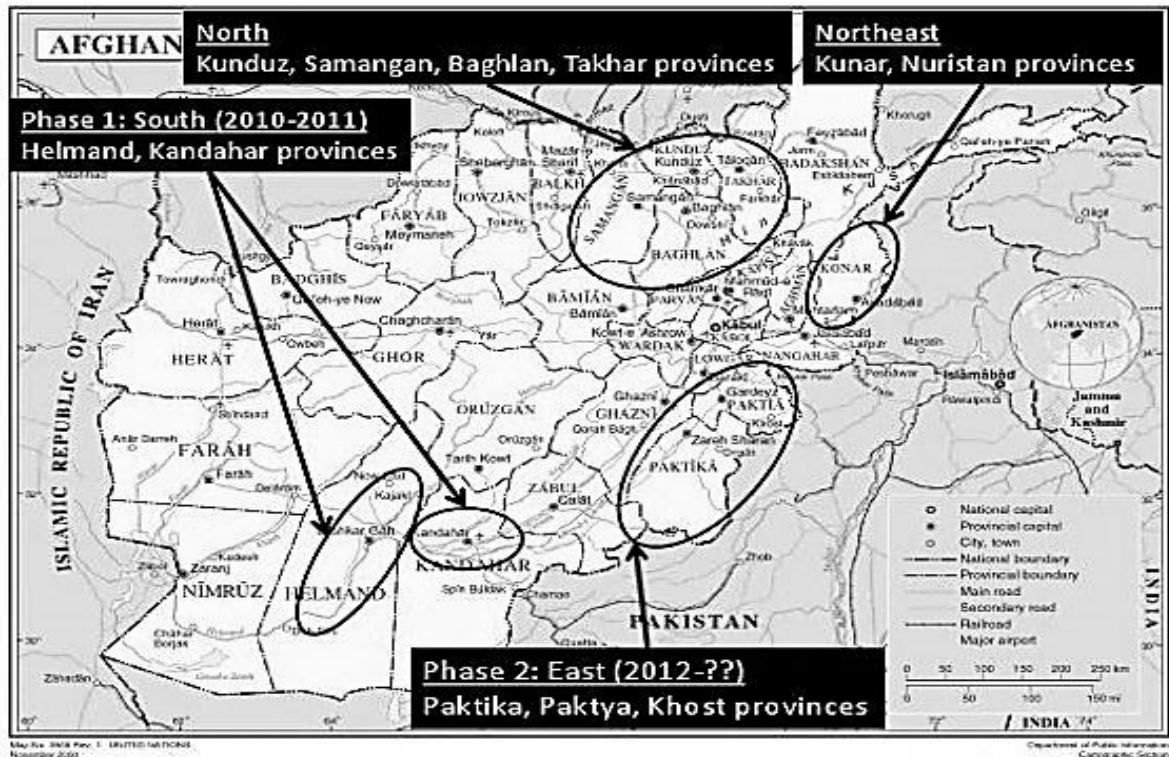
²⁶ Hugh D. Blair, “Challenges With Counterinsurgency,” 8.

²⁷ Anthony H. Cordesman, “The Afghan War: Metrics, Narratives, and Winning the War,” 50.

²⁸ CJ Radin, “Analysis: U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan shifts as forces draw down,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/the_military_strateg_1.php [accessed January 17 – August 3, 2011], 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Figure 3: The 2009 Troop Surge Plan



Source: Radin, CJ, “Analysis: U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan,” (2011): 1, image 1.

Moreover, this strategy would also “provide valuable time to expand the Afghan Army, disburse reconstruction assistance, and create local governments in places where there had been very little government influence.”³⁰ Finally, “with persistent outside efforts, the capacity of the Afghan government would steadily grow, the levels of U.S. and international assistance would decline, and the insurgency would eventually be defeated.”³¹

What the Numbers Say

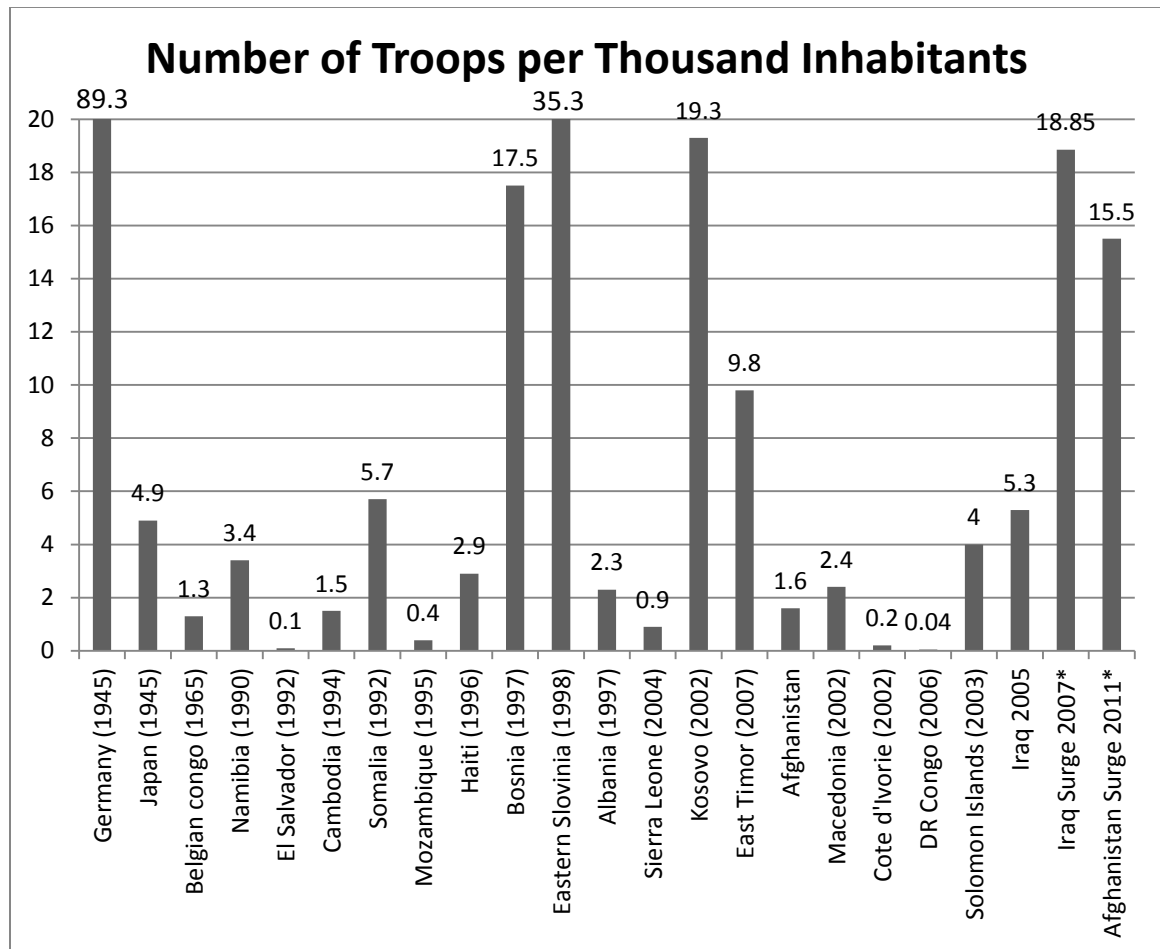
Upon review, troop levels before the surge failed to meet the minimum troop density levels that were needed to secure Afghanistan’s population. As seen in Figure 4,

³⁰ Frances Z. Brown, “Taking Stock of the Surge.” http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/09/26/taking_stock_of_the_surge_from_the_bottom_up [accessed January 20 – September 26, 2012], 4.

³¹ Karl W. Eikenberry “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/136845> [accessed October 17 – September/October 2013], 1.

the light footprint approach used by the United States and ISAF in Afghanistan, translates into one of the lowest troop and police levels in any COIN/stabilization operation since the end of World War II.³² Between 2002 and 2006, troop density levels ranged from 0.61 per thousand inhabitants in 2002 to 4.5 per thousand in 2006.

Figure 4: Number of Troops per Thousand Inhabitants



Source: Dobbins, James, "America's Role in Nation-Building," (2003) & "Europe's Role in Nation-Building: From the Balkans to the Congo," (2008), p. 4, image 1.

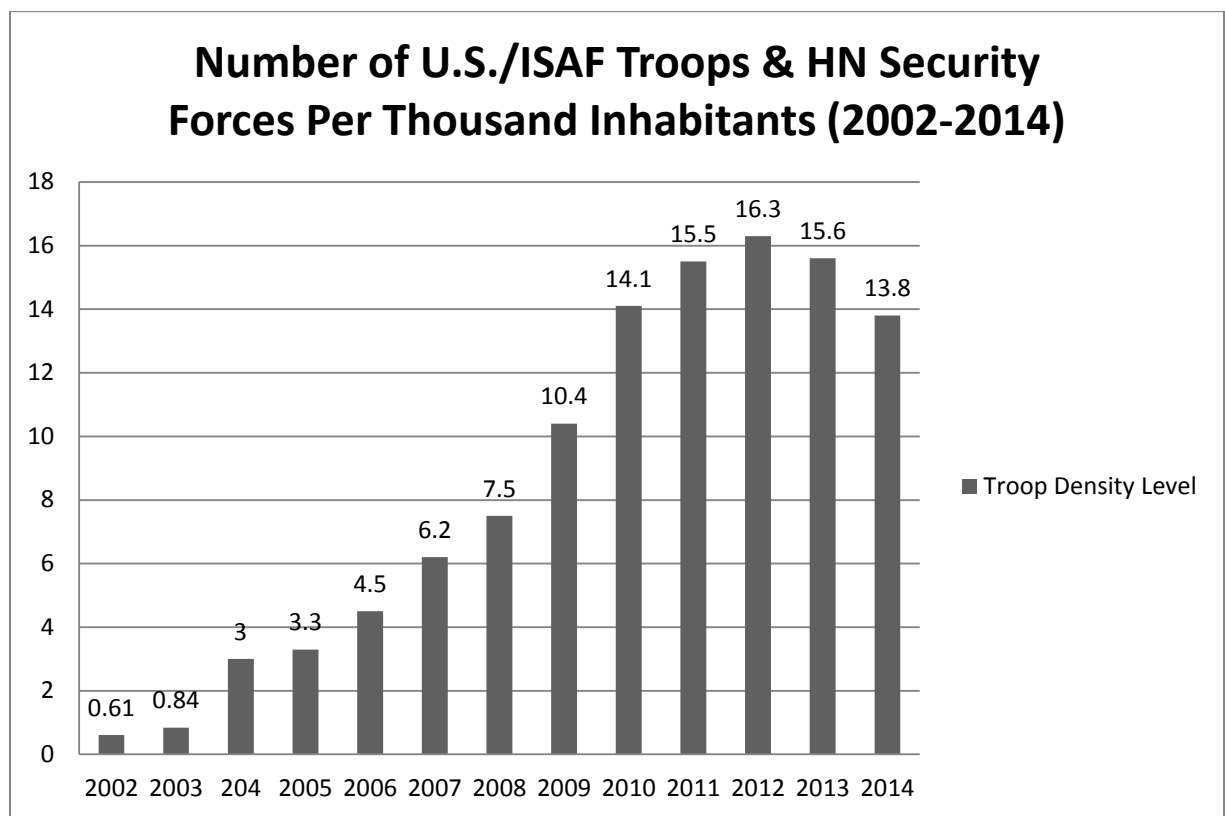
*Cases added by author of this study (data compiled from Brookings Institute Afghan & Iraq Indexes)

These force levels rank with some of the international community's most notable failures: the UN mission of Belgian Congo (1.3 per thousand); the American and UN intervention in Somalia (5.7); the U.S. rescue of Haiti (2.9); the French operation in Cote

³² Ibid., 119.

d'Ivoire (0.2); and the U.S. war in Iraq in 2005 (5.3). By comparison, "89.3 U.S. troops per thousand inhabitants were needed to establish security in the American sector of Germany after World War II, 35.3 per thousand were needed in Eastern Slavonia, 19.3 per thousand in Kosovo, 17.5 per thousand in Bosnia, and 9.8 per thousand in East Timor."³³ As mentioned by Dobbins, "none of these conflicts were resolved easily, even at those levels of troop involvement."³⁴

Figure 5: Number of U.S./ISAF & HN Security Forces per Thousand Inhabitants



Source: The Brookings Institute's "Afghanistan Index," p.4, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Programs/foreign%20policy/afghanistan%20index/index20140227.pdf>

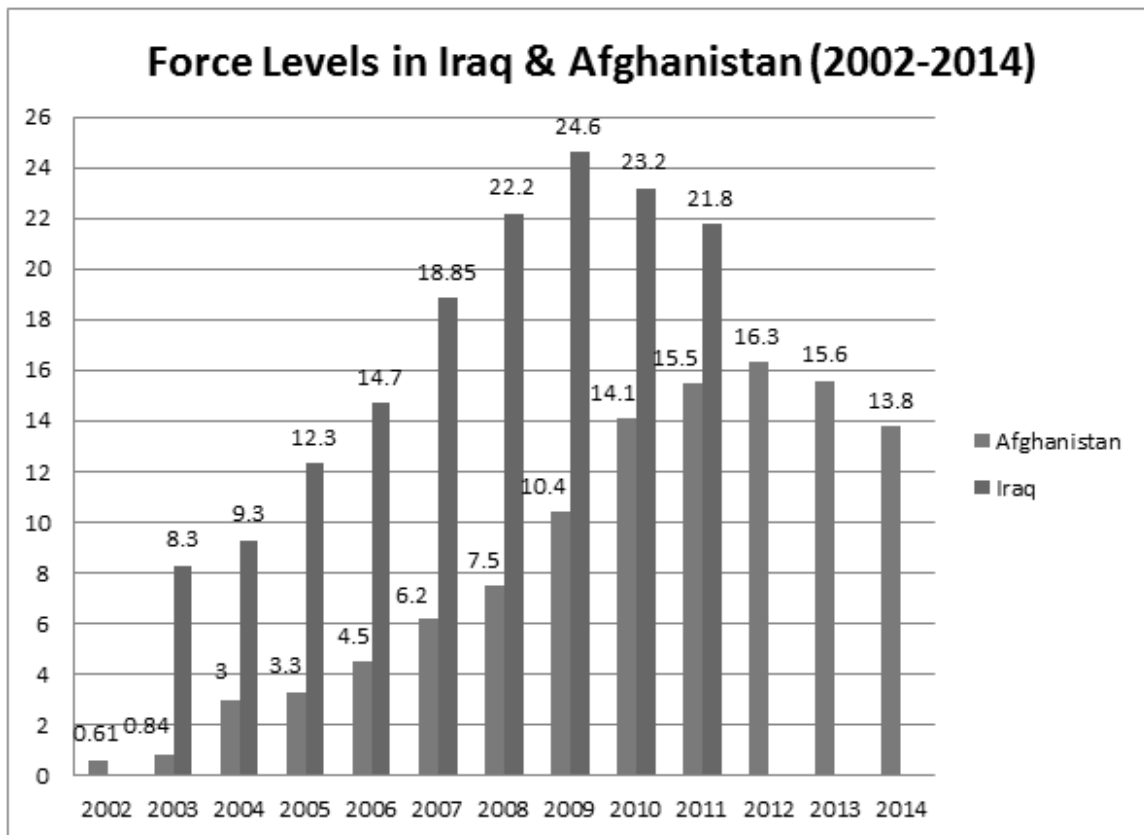
In an attempt to counter the Taliban's momentum, the United States deployed an additional 1,500 troops to Afghanistan in 2007. Between 2007 and 2008, the number of U.S. forces serving in Afghanistan rose from 24,800 in 2007 to 32,500 by the end of

³³ James Dobbins, "America's Role in Nation-Building," 9.

³⁴ Ibid., 9.

2008. ISAF troop levels also increased during this time, as NATO deployed an additional 10,400 troops between 2006 and 2008. Despite this substantial increase, troop density levels continued to remain well below the minimum force requirements recommended by *FM 3-24*. Between 2006 and 2007, troop density levels rose from 4.5 per thousand to 6.2 and by end of 2008, force levels in Afghanistan had reached 7.5 per thousand inhabitants.

Figure 6: Troop Density Levels in Iraq & Afghanistan (2002-2014)

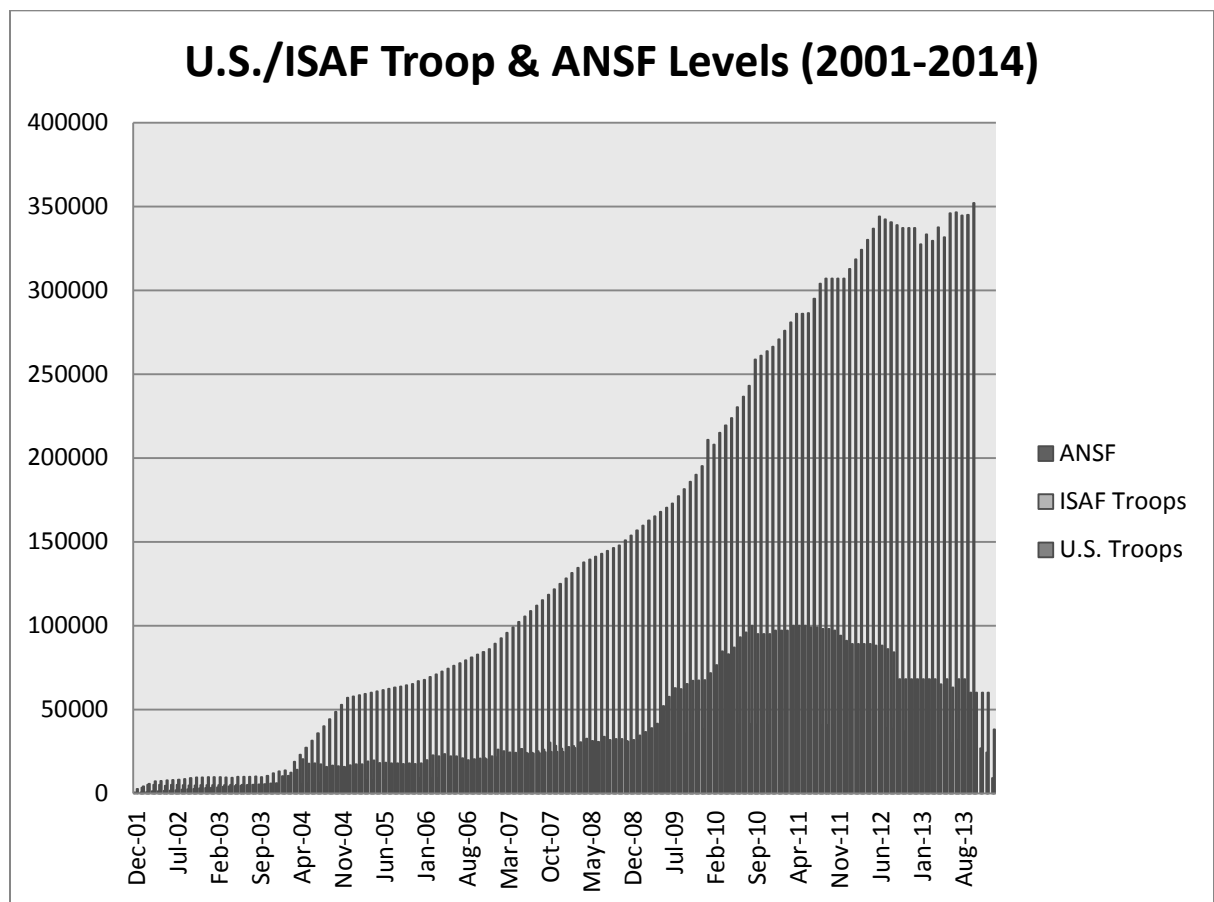


Source: The Brookings Institute's "Afghanistan Index," updated February 2014 & "Iraq Index," updated July 2013

Force levels during this time are very comparable to some of America's most recent contingency and nation-building failures including: Somalia (5.7) and Iraq 2005 (5.3). Moreover, when compared to Iraq, troop density levels in Afghanistan took a much longer time to reach levels achieved by the United States and its allies in Iraq. As seen in Figure 6, there were only 3.3 troops per thousand inhabitants in Afghanistan in 2005,

while there were 12.3 troops per thousand in Iraq. During the height of the Iraq Surge in 2007, troop density levels reached a new high of 18.85 troops per thousand inhabitants. This is 3.5 more troops per thousand residents than during the height of the Afghan surge in 2011 (15.5). This may not seem significant, but it bolsters the argument that the United States was willing to do whatever it took to win in Iraq while doing what it had to do in Afghanistan. Moreover, the COIN strategy that was used to help turn around the Iraq War was supposed to serve as a blueprint for the U.S.'s counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan.

Figure 7: U.S./ISAF Troop & ANSF Levels (2001-2014)



Source: The Brookings Institute's "Afghanistan Index," p.4, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Programs/foreign%20policy/afghanistan%20index/index20140227.pdf>

In a last ditch effort to turn the tide and reverse the Taliban's momentum, the U.S. sent a surge of 30,000 troops along with 6,000 European soldiers as part of a new counterinsurgency strategy implemented by General Stanley McChrystal in 2010. With the surge, the total number of American troops serving in Afghanistan rose to 100,000 while raising the number of NATO troops to over 42,000. Compared to 2009, this is a 1.35% increase in the number of U.S. and ISAF forces serving in Afghanistan. Between 2009 and 2010, force levels rose from 10.4 inhabitants per thousand to 14.1.

This is an increase of over 3.7 troops per thousand. This may not seem significant, but troop density levels in Afghanistan did not reach 3.7 troops per thousand until 2006 (4.5), almost five years after the war had started. Troop density levels continued to rise in 2011 (15.5) as U.S. and Coalition forces reached their peak. At the same time, ANSF forces were beginning to conduct a small number of operations on their own and had started to take over security in the central, northern, and western parts of the country. Even though a majority of the surge troops sent by the U.S. were withdrawn in September 2012, force levels reached an all-time of 16.3 per thousand inhabitants as ANSF forces reached a level of 342,378 by July 2012.

When compared to the 22 other cases listed above, force levels in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2012 rank with some of the highest levels reached by U.S. and international forces in Kosovo (19.3); Iraq 2007 (18.85); Bosnia (17.3); and East Timor (9.8). These campaigns are considered to be some of the more successful COIN and nation-building operations carried out by the United States and international community in recent years.³⁵ Despite reaching similar force levels, the counterinsurgency and accompanying surge strategy implemented by Generals McChrystal and Petraeus failed

³⁵ Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 119.

to meet the troop density levels needed to conduct a successful COIN operation. Moreover, the U.S. and NATO have been unable to generate the kind of success experienced by these other campaigns as violence continues to plague eastern Afghanistan and has spread to areas previously unaffected by the insurgency. Thus, as pointed out by Stephen Good (2009), “having enough forces to reverse increasing insurgent violence does not always equate to victory, or even the attainment of low levels of violence.”³⁶

Even though it may appear that troop density levels are not useful in determining how many troops are needed to secure the population or carry out a successful COIN campaign, this study has shown that numbers do matter and that past campaigns that have come close to or meet the force requirements advocated by *FM 3-24* have been historically more successful than those that have not. This study has also shown that military efforts alone however, cannot ensure victory in a coin campaign. Thus, “having adequate forces can at best enable the counterinsurgent side to provide a certain level of security, and security itself is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for victory.”³⁷

Efforts to Secure Afghanistan’s Borders

In order to protect the population, “the counterinsurgent force must also be able to control key terrain, both natural and man-made, in and around major urban areas, as well as the border regions between neighboring countries.”³⁸ Thus, one of the main goals of the U.S.’s COIN strategy was to help the Afghan Government secure its borders and deny cross-border mobility to insurgents and other anti-government/criminal elements. To accomplish this objective, “U.S. efforts to secure Afghanistan’s border focused on two

³⁶ Steven M. Goode, “A Historical Basis for Force Requirements,” 56.

³⁷ Ibid., 59.

³⁸ Hugh D. Blair “Challenges With Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan,” 5.

areas: (1) building the capacity of the Afghan Border Police (ABP) and (2) regional engagement.”³⁹ According to Generals McChrystal and Petraeus, securing Afghanistan’s border would directly support security in the country “by denying insurgents access to and from sanctuaries in Pakistan.”⁴⁰ Securing the borders would also promote security by “limiting or preventing the flow of illegal narcotics across the border, thereby denying criminals and insurgents alike an important source of revenue.”⁴¹

Afghanistan shares borders with six countries, but the approximate 1,500-mile-long Durand Line along Pakistan remains the most dangerous. “Since 2001, the United States has pursued several initiatives to reduce tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan and to encourage both governments to concentrate their attention on countering the Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists operating inside their territories.”⁴² Unfortunately, incidents of violence have increased on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border “as historical conflicts, different priorities, and personal animosities have combined to weaken the collective ability of the three countries to repress Islamist extremists operating along the border.”⁴³

In the last several years, U.S. officials and national intelligence reports have “repeatedly attributed the growing strength of al Qaeda and the resurgence of the Taliban to safe havens in this border region.”⁴⁴ According to the Pentagon, “the existence of militant sanctuaries inside Pakistan’s FATA represents the greatest challenge to long-

³⁹ Anthony H. Cordesman, “Winning in Afghanistan: Creating Effective Afghan Security Forces,” <http://csis.org/publication/winning-afghanistan> [accessed February 20-May 2, 2009], 21.

⁴⁰ Ali A. Jalali, “Winning in Afghanistan,” <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/09spring/jalali.pdf> [accessed February 21 – March 2009], 14.

⁴¹ Department of Defense, “Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” 19.

⁴² Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules: The U.S. Role,” http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicn/eurasia_border_review/abr3/weitz.pdf [accessed February 20- November 27, 2011], 1.

⁴³ Jayshree Bajoria, “The Troubled Afghan-Pakistani Border,” <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/troubled-afghan-pakistani-border/p14905> [accessed February 20 – March 20, 2009], 1.

⁴⁴ Dilip Hiro, *Apocalyptic Realm: Jihadists in South Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 207.

term security within Afghanistan.”⁴⁵ In 2008, General David McKiernan, the top commander in Afghanistan, “asserted that Pakistan’s northwestern tribal regions provide the main pool for recruiting insurgents who fight in Afghanistan.”⁴⁶ Most intelligence analysts appear to agree that, so long as Taliban forces enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan, the U.S. will be unable to quell the insurgency plaguing most of Afghanistan.⁴⁷

Heart of Darkness: The Afghan/Pakistan Border

Shortly after the fall of the Taliban in December 2001, the group along with some members of al Qaeda (AQ) began to establish sanctuaries in northwest Pakistan, specifically in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).⁴⁸ Consisting of seven provinces: “Bajaur, Mohmand, Kyber, Kurram, Orakzai, North and South Waziristan, FATA has served as a buffer zone operating under its own paramilitary forces and police and ruled directly by the President of Pakistan via the Governor of North West Frontier Province.”⁴⁹ Shortly after 9/11, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the adjoining North West Frontier Province served as an escape hatch for al Qaeda and Taliban fighters trying to escape U.S. and Afghan forces.⁵⁰ According to Ahmed Rashid, with the arrival of al Qaeda and other Islamic militant groups, FATA became a multilayered terrorist cake.⁵¹

“At its base were Pakistani Pashtun tribesmen, soon to become Taliban in their own right, who provided the hideouts and logistical support. Above them were the

⁴⁵ Ibid., 297.

⁴⁶ K Alan Kronstadt, “Islamist Militancy in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Region and U.S. Policy,” <http://www.fas.org/srg/crs/row/RL34763.pdf> [accessed February 20 – November 21, 2008], 3.

⁴⁷ Imtiaz Gul, *The Most Dangerous Place: Pakistan’s Lawless Frontier*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), xxv.

⁴⁸ Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules: The U.S. Role,” http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicn/eurasia_border_review/eb3/weitz.pdf [accessed February 20- November 27, 2011], 1.

⁴⁹ Imtiaz Gul, *The Most Dangerous Place*, 46.

⁵⁰ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: How the War Against Islamic Extremism is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, (New York: Penguin Books Limited, 2008), 268.

⁵¹ Ibid., 265.

Afghan Taliban, who settled there after 9/11 followed by militants from Central Asia, Chechnya, Africa, China, and Kashmir, and topped by Arabs who forged a protective ring around bin Laden. FATA became the world's 'terrorism central.'⁵²

It was from here that the bomb plots in London, Madrid, Bali, Islamabad, and later Germany and Denmark were planned.⁵³

Al Qaeda's first sanctuary was the South Waziristan agency. "With its high mountains, steep slopes, deep ravines littered with broken rock and shale, and its thick forests, it was an ideal hideout."⁵⁴ In June 2002, U.S. military officials believed there were up to 3,500 foreign militants hiding out in South Waziristan.⁵⁵ At the time, "Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf was deflecting U.S. pressure to send in troops on account with Pakistan's standoff with India as al Qaeda and Taliban fighters brazenly launched rockets at U.S. firebases at Shikin and Lawara, just inside Afghanistan."⁵⁶ Coalition forces also complained that paramilitary soldiers from the Frontier Corps were helping al Qaeda fighters cross the border or were providing covering fire to distract U.S. forces.⁵⁷

American officers on the ground soon became frustrated and began pressuring U.S. commander, Lt.-Gen. Dan McNeill, to allow them to chase al Qaeda fighters into South Waziristan."⁵⁸ Even though he did not have permission from the Pentagon to do so, McNeil threatened to cross the border into Pakistan if the cross-border raids by the Taliban and other militant groups continued. "U.S. forces acknowledge the

⁵² Ibid., 265.

⁵³ Peter Bergen & Katherine Tiedemann, "The Drone War," http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2009/drone_war_13672 [accessed February 12 – June 3, 2009], 6.

⁵⁴ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, 268.

⁵⁵ Zahid Hussain, *The Scorpion's Tail: The Relentless Rise of Islamic Militants in Pakistan—And How it Threatens America*, (New York: Free Press, 2010), 78.

⁵⁶ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, 269.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 269.

⁵⁸ K Alan Kronstadt, "Islamist Militancy in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border," 3.

internationally recognized boundaries of Afghanistan, but may pursue attackers who attempted to escape into Pakistan to evade capture or retaliation, read a U.S. Army statement.”⁵⁹ There was also mounting U.S. pressure on Musharraf to act or face unilateral attacks inside FATA.⁶⁰

U.S. and NATO forces “noted a sharp deterioration in border security after the Pakistani government began negotiating a series of peace deals with local tribal leaders and with various extremist groups.”⁶¹ Between 2004 and 2008, the Pakistani government and military cut numerous peace deals with the Pakistani Taliban, the most famous of which was the May 2008 Swat Agreement.⁶² The peace agreements, “which were struck throughout the tribal areas and in Swat and other settled districts in the northwest, required the Taliban to accept the writ of the state and eject “foreigners,” or al Qaeda and allied groups, from their areas.”⁶³ Despite these agreements, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) refused to abide by them, and instead established mini-Islamic emirates while continuing to expand their control into neighboring areas.⁶⁴ By 2008, U.S. combat deaths in Afghanistan began to exceed those in Iraq, “despite the fact that five times as many U.S. troops were in Iraq than Afghanistan at the time.”⁶⁵

In July 2007, a National Intelligence Estimate issued by the entire U.S. intelligence community stated “that al Qaeda was based in FATA and that the United States would not hesitate to bomb or even invade any part of FATA if bin Laden was

⁵⁹ Carlotta Gall, “Pakistanis Tied to 2007 Border Attacks on U.S.,” *New York Times*, September 26, 2011.

⁶⁰ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: How the War Against Islamic Extremism is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, (New York: Penguin Books Limited, 2008), 268.270

⁶¹ Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules: The U.S. Role, 5.

⁶² Bill Roggio, “Pakistan Government Inks Peace Deal with Swat Taliban, 2.

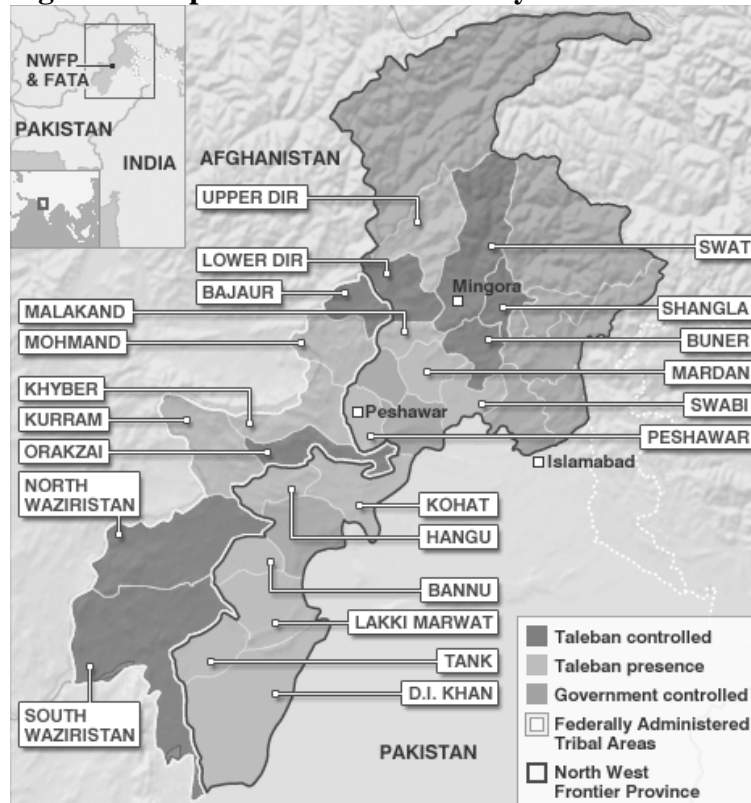
⁶³ Bill Roggio, “Pakistani Taliban Announce Ceasefire with Government,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/03/pakistani_taliban_an.php [accessed March 12-March 1, 2014], 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

found to be hiding there.”⁶⁶ In 2008, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, singled out the terrorist camps in Northwest Pakistan as one of the most serious threats confronting the next U.S. presidential administration: “Al Qaeda is there. Its leadership is there. We know that. And it continues to plan against the West, including against our homeland.”⁶⁷ The Pakistani Army did conduct several minor raids against militants in Northwest Pakistan between 2002 and 2005, but most of these were for show and did not achieve any strategic objectives.⁶⁸

Figure 8: Map of Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas



Source: BBC News.Com, “Taliban Growing in Strength,” p.1, http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/news/2009/05/090513_pakistan_map.shtml

In the spring of 2009, the Pakistani military finally launched a major operation to clear militants and foreign fighters operating in FATA. In what became the Second Battle

⁶⁶ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, 278.

⁶⁷ K Alan Kronstadt, “Islamist Militancy in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Region,” 4.

⁶⁸ Ali Imtiaz, “Military Victory in South Waziristan or the Beginning of a Long War?” *Terrorism Monitor* Volume: 7 Issue: 38 (2009): 5.

of Swat, the Pakistan Army launched the strategic airborne attack, codenamed “Black Thunderstorm” on April 26, 2009. The objective of this operation was the retaking of Buner, Lower Dir, Swat, and Shangla districts under the control of the radical militant leader Maulana Fazullah.⁶⁹ Following the success of “Operation Black Thunderstorm”, the Pakistani military conducted another campaign called “Operation Rah-e-Nijat” (Path to Salvation) that began on June 19th, 2009. “Supported by F-16 fighter jets and helicopter gunships, 30,000 Pakistani soldiers engaged over 10,000 militants and foreign fighters.”⁷⁰ Many analysts quickly “described this much-awaited operation as the ‘mother of all battles.’”⁷¹

During the battle, senior TTP leaders were forced to abandon their posts and escape to neighboring Afghanistan as thousands of their fighters were either killed or captured by Pakistani forces. On December 12th, “the military announced the success of the operation as all of South Waziristan was now under the full control of the Pakistani government, denying al Qaeda and its militant allies from their former stronghold.”⁷² Despite these operations, U.S. officials continued to complain “that members of the Pakistani military and ISI were still providing aid and training to the Taliban, including alerting them to imminent U.S. air strikes on Pakistani territory.”⁷³ Since the Afghan Taliban, Haqqani Network, and HIG do not carry out attacks against the Pakistani state, Islamabad has refused to target these groups as they see them as potential allies against India. As Steve Coll explains (2010),

⁶⁹ Ann Scott Tyson, “Insurgents putting up tough fight in Waziristan, report says,” *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2009.

⁷⁰ Frederick W. Kagan, Reza Jan, & Charlie Szrom, “The War in Waziristan: Operation Rah-e-Nijat,” <http://www.criticalthreats.org/pakistan/war-waziristan-operation-rah-e-nijat-phase-1-analysis> [accessed February 21-November 18, 2009], 1.

⁷¹ Imtiaz Ali, “Military Victory in South Waziristan or the Beginning of a Long War?”, 6.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷³ K Alan Kronstadt, “Islamist Militancy in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Region,” 5.

“Pakistan’s generals have retained a bedrock belief that, however unruly and distasteful Islamist militias may be, they could yet be useful proxies to ward off a perceived existential threat from India. Many more Pakistanis believe that since the U.S. and NATO are planning to withdraw from the region in the next few years, the Taliban could well return to power in Kabul, making it important for Pakistan not to antagonize them.”⁷⁴

Pakistan’s support for the Afghan insurgency is also “reinforced by its aspiration for influence among the Pashtuns that are divided by the disputed ‘Durand Line’ which separates Afghanistan and Pakistan.”⁷⁵

Pakistani Complicity with the Taliban

During the last seven years, “multiple reports have surfaced that elements of Pakistani intelligence and the military are in close contact with and supporting members of the Taliban and other Afghan insurgent groups.”⁷⁶ According to Ahmed Rashid (2010),

“Taliban leaders and their families live in Pakistan and are in close touch with the military and ISI. Some Taliban allies, such as the network led by Jalaluddin Haqqani, are even closer to the ISI.”⁷⁷

Three of the most wanted terrorists by the United States are also widely believed to reside in Pakistan, including al Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri, Mullah Omar, and Haqqani Network leader Sirajuddin Haqqani.⁷⁸ “Some intelligence officers believe that Mullah Omar may be receiving protection from elements of the Pakistani government in either Quetta or Karachi.”⁷⁹ U.S. officials have also “repeatedly accused the ISI of actively

⁷⁴ Steve Coll, “Don’t Look Back,” <http://newamerica.net/node/28404> [accessed February 25- March 1, 2010], 1.

⁷⁵ Matt Waldman, “The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship Between Pakistan’s ISI and Afghan Insurgents,” <http://www.aljazeera.com/mritems/Documents/2010/6/13/20106138531279734lse-isi-taliban.pdf> [accessed February 25 – June 2010], 5.

⁷⁶ Zachary Laub, “Pakistan’s New Generation of Terrorists,” 4.

⁷⁷ Ahmed Rashid, “Pakistan and the Afghanistan End Game,” <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/pakistan-and-afghanistan-end-game-part-I> [accessed February 25 – March 12, 2010], 4.

⁷⁸ Sami Yousafzai, Moreau, & Klaidman, “America’s Next Most Wanted, *Newsweek* May 7, 2012.

⁷⁹ K Alan Kronstadt, “Islamist Militancy in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Region,” 23.

supporting the Taliban, Haqqani Network, and other insurgent groups with money, supplies, and planning guidance.”⁸⁰

According to Matt Waldman (2010), the Taliban-ISI relationship is founded on mutual benefit. “The Taliban need external sanctuary, as well as military and logistical support to sustain their insurgency, the ISI believes that it needs a significant allied force in Afghanistan to maintain regional strength and ‘strategic depth’ in their rivalry with India.”⁸¹ Pakistan has been intimately associated with the Taliban since its creation in the mid-1990s.⁸²

By 2001, the ISI and Pakistani military “were providing the Taliban with hundreds of advisers and experts to run its tanks, aircraft, and artillery, and thousands of Pakistani Pashtuns to man its infantry”⁸³ At one point, up to thirty ISI trucks a day were crossing into Afghanistan.⁸⁴ In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, “Pakistan reluctantly chose to side with the U.S. as American and allied forces intervened in Afghanistan with a UN mandate and toppled the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.”⁸⁵

This created a dilemma for Pakistan, “as it now had to hunt down the Taliban and other Islamic militant organizations it had helped to create in the first place.”⁸⁶ Pakistan officially became a coalition partner of the United States in the Global War on Terror, “it simultaneously continued supporting and directing the Taliban as a deputy government in

⁸⁰ Ibid., 23.

⁸¹ Matt Waldman, “The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship Between Pakistan’s ISI and Afghan Insurgents,” <http://www.aljazeera.com/mritems/Documents/2010/6/13/20106138531279734lse-isi-taliban.pdf> [accessed February 25 – June 2010], 5.

⁸² Bruce Riedel, “Pakistan, Taliban, and the Afghan Quagmire,” <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/08/26-pakistan-influence-over-afghan-taliban-riedel> [accessed February 25-August 24, 2013], 1.

⁸³ Ibid., 1.

⁸⁴ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Oil, Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 60.

⁸⁵ Bruce Riedel, “Pakistan, Taliban, and the Afghan Quagmire,” 1.

⁸⁶ Matt Waldman, “The Sun in the Sky,” 6.

Afghanistan.”⁸⁷

Shortly after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the ISI began granting refuge to the Taliban and other Islamic militants it regarded as friendly, while extraditing al Qaeda fighters to the United States.⁸⁸ According to Adrian Hanni and Lukas Hegi, “the Pakistani military and ISI played a central and active role”⁸⁹ in aiding and training the Taliban, “promising them money, weapons, and other kinds of support.”⁹⁰ The ISI also allowed Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of the HIG and Jalaluddin Haqqani of the Haqqani Networks to set up bases in Northwestern Pakistan, from where they could launch attacks against U.S., Coalition, and Afghan forces from.⁹¹

Over the last decade, analysts have “disputed whether ISI support to the insurgency is officially sanctioned, and whether it is carried out by serving or former officers.”⁹² According to Matt Waldman, “some analysts speak of the collaboration of elements within the ISI with the Taliban.”⁹³ Antonio Giustozzi argues “there is evidence of the involvement of the insurgency of advisors with long-standing experience of Afghanistan, such as current or former ISI operatives.”⁹⁴ Seth Jones has argued, “there is some indication that individuals within the Pakistan government—for example, within the Frontier Corps and the ISI—were involved in assisting insurgent groups.”⁹⁵ He has

⁸⁷ Adrian Hanni & Lukas Hegi “The Pakistani Godfather,” 7.

⁸⁸ Adrian Hanni & Lukas Hegi, “The Pakistan Godfather: The Inter-Services Intelligence and the Afghan Taliban 1994-2010, <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCAQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsmallwarsjournal.com%2Fprintpdf%2F13957&ei=RIbWVKOOMIGmgwTHpICACw&usg=AFQjCNEjsn0zBNTICSRNdFiJ3nBiOvfdmA&bvm=bv.85464276,d.eXY> [accessed February 23-April 2, 2013], 7.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁰ Matt Waldman, “The Sun in the Sky,” 17.

⁹¹ Adrian Hanni & Lukas Hegi, “The Pakistan Godfather,” 8.

⁹² Matt Waldman, “The Sun in the Sky,” 17.

⁹³ Thomas H. Johnson & Chris Mason, “Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan,” 3.

⁹⁴ Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan 2002-2007*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 213.

⁹⁵ Seth G. Jones, “The Rise of Afghanistan’s Insurgency,” 35

also reported that by mid-2008, “the United States collected fairly solid evidence of senior-level complicity [in ISI support to the insurgents].”⁹⁶

In July 2010, WikiLeaks, released dozens of U.S. diplomatic documents that detailed Pakistan’s links with Islamist militants including the Afghan Taliban and al Qaeda. Some of the most important documents “detail a 2006 meeting with senior Taliban leaders in which Pakistani officials pushed for an attack on Maruf, a district of Kandahar that lies beside the Pakistan border.”⁹⁷ An offensive began later that year.⁹⁸ The files also link active and retired ISI officers to some of the Afghan insurgency’s most notorious leaders including General Hamid Gul, who ran the ISI from 1987 to 1989.⁹⁹

In one classified “threat report”, Gul is described ordering magnetic mines to be planted in snow on roads used by military vehicles.¹⁰⁰ “Gul’s final comment to the three individuals was ‘to make the snow warm in Kabul’ basically telling them to set Kabul aflame,” the report said.”¹⁰¹ Another report describes a meeting between Gul and a group of militants in Wana, the capital of South Waziristan, in January 2009. There, he met with three senior Afghan insurgent commanders and three “older” Arab men, presumably representatives of al Qaeda, who the report suggests were important because “they had a large security contingent with them.”¹⁰² Some of the other documents released by WikiLeaks contain accounts of American anger at Pakistan’s unwillingness to confront insurgents who launched attacks near Pakistani border posts, moved openly by the

⁹⁶Ibid., 35.

⁹⁷ Mark Mazzetti, Jane Perlez, Eric Schmitt, and Andrew W. Lehren, “Pakistan Aids Insurgency in Afghanistan, Reports Assert,” *New York Times*, July 25, 2010.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁹ Adrian Hanni & Lukas Hegi, “The Pakistan Godfather,” 10.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰¹ Rob Crilly & Alex Spillius, “Wikileaks: Pakistan accused of helping Taliban in Afghanistan attacks,” *The Telegraph*, July 26, 2010.

¹⁰² Ibid., 1.

truckload across the frontier and retreated to Pakistani territory for safety.¹⁰³

A NATO study published in 2012 “based on the interrogations of 4,000 captured Taliban, al-Qaeda and other fighters in Afghanistan concluded that ISI support was critical to the survival and revival of the Taliban after 2001 just as it was critical to its conquest of Afghanistan in the 1990s.”¹⁰⁴ It provides sanctuary, training camps, expertise and help with fund raising. The NATO report concluded “the ISI is thoroughly aware of Taliban activities and the whereabouts of all senior Taliban personnel.”¹⁰⁵

The circumstances of Osama bin Laden’s (OBL) death “brought more focus on purported Pakistani and ISI links with Islamist militants.”¹⁰⁶ On May 2, 2011, bin Laden was located and killed in a compound in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad. This compound was just a half-mile from the Kakul Military Academy, Pakistan's equivalent of West Point, and close to various army regiments. The news of Osama bin Laden’s whereabouts led to immediate questioning of Pakistan’s role and potential complicity in his refuge.¹⁰⁷ President Obama’s chief counterterrorism advisor, John Brennan, told reporters it was “inconceivable that Osama bin Laden did not have a support system in Pakistan.”¹⁰⁸

Following the May 2011 raid, the Pakistani government began to crack down on people it believed to be working with the CIA. In May 2011, the ISI was accused of

¹⁰³ Nick Paton Walsh, “Secret NATO Taliban report revives Pakistan Fears,” <http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/01/world/asia/pakistan-nato-report/> [accessed February 27 – February 1, 2012], 1.

¹⁰⁴ Bruce Riedel, “Pakistan, Taliban, and the Afghan Quagmire,” <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/08/26-pakistan-influence-over-afghan-taliban-riedel> [accessed February 25-August 24, 2013], 1.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁶ K. Alan Kronstadt, “Pakistan-U.S. Relations,” <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41832.pdf> [accessed February 22- May 24, 2012], 24

¹⁰⁷ John Rollins, “Osama bin Laden’s Death: Implications and Considerations,” <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41809.pdf> [accessed February 27-May 5, 2011], 1.

¹⁰⁸ The Times of India, “It is inconceivable Osama had no support system in Pak: U.S.” <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/It-is-inconceivable-Osama-had-no-support-system-in-PakUS/articleshow/814892.cms?referral=PM> [accessed February 27 – May 3, 2011], 1.

ordering the torture and murder of investigative journalist Syed Saleem Shahzad who had just finished writing a book detailing Pakistan's links with al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban and how fundamentalists had infiltrated Pakistan's military establishments. Pakistani authorities also arrested Dr. Shakil Afridi, "who aided the CIA's manhunt for Osama bin Laden by going door-to-door in Abbottabad offering hepatitis jabs to children in an attempt to collect DNA samples from OBL's compound."¹⁰⁹ On May 23rd, Dr. Afridi was convicted of treason by a court in northwestern Pakistan and sentenced to 33 years in prison.¹¹⁰

After the May 2nd raid, "ISI leadership was confronted more frequently by U.S. officials over allegations of collusion between the Pakistani government and Afghan insurgents, especially with the Haqqani Network."¹¹¹ The terrorist network led by Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin, is "commonly identified as the most dangerous of Afghan insurgent groups battling U.S.-led forces in eastern Afghanistan."¹¹² The Haqqani network, "which professes obedience to Taliban leader Mullah Omar, is believed to have been involved in some of the most audacious attacks of the Afghan war."¹¹³

During oral testimony given to the Senate Armed Services Committee on September 22, 2011, Admiral Mike Mullen repeatedly reiterated his concerns about the ISI's role in sponsoring Haqqani Network attacks: "The fact remains that the Quetta

¹⁰⁹ K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan-U.S. Relations," 16.

¹¹⁰ John Rollins, "Osama bin Laden's Death: Implications and Considerations," <https://www.fas.org/sgp/cr/s/terror/R41809.pdf> [accessed February 27-May 5, 2011], 5.

¹¹¹ K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan-U.S. Relations," 16.

¹¹² Thomas Joscelyn, "Admiral Mullen: Pakistani ISI sponsoring Haqqani attacks," http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/09/admiral_mullen_pakis.php [accessed February 23 – September 22, 2011], 1.

¹¹³ Missy Ryan & Phil Stewart, "Eyeing Afghan Exit, U.S. intensifies campaign against Haqqani Militants," <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/26/us-afghanistan-usa-militants-idUSBREA1O1SV20140226> [accessed February 26 - February 26, 2013], 2.

Shura [Taliban] and the Haqqani Network operate from Pakistan with impunity. Extremist organizations serving as proxies of the government of Pakistan are attacking Afghan troops and civilians as well as U.S. soldiers.”¹¹⁴ Publicly, the Obama administration did not fully back up Admiral Mullen’s charges against the ISI and Pakistani government. President Obama himself later stated, “I think the intelligence is not as clear as we might like in terms of what exactly the [ISI-Haqqani] relationship is,”¹¹⁵ but he still insisted that the Pakistanis “have got to take care of this problem in any case.”¹¹⁶

U.S. Efforts to Secure the Border from the Flow of Insurgents and Foreign Fighters

Since 2001, “the United States has provided the Afghan and Pakistani governments and militaries with considerable money, equipment, training, and other security assistance.”¹¹⁷ The U.S. has also provided economic aid to the border region.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the United States “helped to establish a Joint Intelligence Operations center in Kabul to provide a forum where analysts from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and ISAF could share and evaluate data about terrorist activities along the Afghan-Pakistan border.”¹¹⁹

Unfortunately, none of these attempts have proven very effective at curbing the flow of fighters and weapons crossing the Afghan-Pakistani border. Even though the United States and NATO has so far been unsuccessful in securing Afghanistan’s border with Pakistan with the efforts discussed above, programs such as the creation of the Afghanistan Border Police, the use of armed drones in Pakistan’s Federally Administered

¹¹⁴ Thomas Joscelyn, “Admiral Mullen: Pakistani ISI sponsoring Haqqani attacks,” 1.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Joscelyn, “Admiral Mullen: Pakistani ISI sponsoring Haqqani attacks,” 2.

¹¹⁶ K. Alan Kronstadt, “Pakistan-U.S. Relations,” 31.

¹¹⁷ Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules: The U.S. Role,” http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicn/eurasia_border_review/abr3/weitz.pdf [accessed February 20- November 27, 2011], 4.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 4.

Tribal Areas, and Counterterrorism Pursuit Teams have yield better results.

Building the Capacity of the Afghan Border Police

Afghanistan shares borders with six other countries and has over 3,400 miles of international border – most of it vast desert or high mountains.¹²⁰ “The most treacherous of these borders is the 1,500 mile border with Pakistan, which serves as a safe haven for various insurgents, foreign fighters, bandits, and smugglers.”¹²¹ In order to help stem the flow of insurgents, equipment, and weapons coming in from Pakistan, the United States and international community created the Afghan Border Police in 2005.¹²² The mission of this new force was to “provide law enforcement capabilities at borders and entry points, including the country’s airports, in order to deter criminal activity and the movement of insurgents into Afghanistan.”¹²³

Originally, the Afghan Border Police was overseen by the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs with DnyCorp. Other organizations have also helped to train the APB including; the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection agencies.¹²⁴ By the end of 2008, the ABP maintained an operational strength of approximately 12,000 out of an authorized strength of nearly 18,000.¹²⁵ Like the ANP, the Afghan Border Police undergo an eight-week training program conducted by private U.S. security contractors.

¹²⁰ Jayshree Bajoria, “The Troubled Afghan-Pakistani Border,” 1.

¹²¹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 42.

¹²² Institute for the Study of War, “Afghan National Police (ANP),” <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghan-national-police-anp> [accessed February 25 – May 2009], 1.

¹²³ Ewen MackAskill, “Pentagon says U.S. progress in Afghanistan war is ‘patchy,’” <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/24/afghanistan-war-pentagon-report-congress> [accessed February 25 – November 23, 2010], 3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁵ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghan National Police (ANP),” 1.

In January 2009, the U.S. military launched a major overhaul in the training of the Afghan Border Police in response to the Focused Border Development program that was developed by the Afghan government and international community to combat corruption and incompetence plaguing most of the ABP. In the past, “the U.S. primarily relied on small teams of embedded advisers to train Afghan security forces, but those teams were in short supply, especially for the border police and Afghan National Police.”¹²⁶ In response to this demand for more advisers, commanders from the 4th BCT of the 101st Airborne Division began assigning each of its battalions to work with a battalion of border police during joint operations in eastern Afghanistan. Besides training, new recruits were also issued new weapons and gear.¹²⁷

Before 2009, Border Patrol commanders “complained of a lack of heavy weapons and few development projects in their areas, which they said made it difficult to win over the local population.”¹²⁸ By the end of 2010, U.S. and ISAF forces had trained and equipped over 4,200 border police members at a cost of \$70 million.¹²⁹ The U.S. also built 18 operational border facilities along the Afghan-Pakistani border with the hopes of building 139 more.¹³⁰ Despite dramatic improvements in their operational capabilities, “the Afghan Border Police continue to be plagued by corruption, incompetence, and a lack of funding and weapons.”¹³¹

According to officials from Academi (formerly Blackwater International) and

¹²⁶ Michael Gisick, “Afghan Border Patrol Facing more Training Courses,” <http://www.stripes.com/news/afghan-border-patrol-facing-more-training-courses-1.87541> [accessed February 25 – January 26, 2009], 2

¹²⁷ Josh Smith, “Advisers face reality checks along Afghan Border,” <http://www.stripes.com/advisers-face-reality-checks-along-afghan-border-1.220488> [accessed February 25 – May 10, 2013], 1.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹³⁰ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghan National Police (ANP),” <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghan-national-police-anp> [accessed February 25 – May 2009], 2.

¹³¹ Michael Gisick, “Afghan Border Patrol Facing more Training Courses,” 3.

Dyncorp, “roughly one in twelve of the Afghan troops who have attended the ABP basic training course were thrown out after failing drug tests.”¹³² Officials also heard complaints from ABP commanders that their troops “are still being issued cheaply made Pakistani or Egyptian assault rifles, rather than the Hungarian models promised to them.”¹³³ Even though the ABP is fully funded for equipment and supplies, “corruption within the Afghan Ministry of Interior (AMOI) and at the regional logistic hubs present problems for units in the field stationed along the Afghan borders.”¹³⁴ In many parts of the country, the Afghan Border Police are also complicit in the drug smuggling trade.¹³⁵

Use of CIA Paramilitary Teams along the Afghan/Pakistan Border

The CIA has also assigned a small number of American civilians and paramilitary troops to operate alongside the Pakistani military, but primarily as advisors.¹³⁶ The teams “provide the Pakistanis with various types of intelligence, especially analyses of intercepted communications and imagery data from U.S. planes and spy satellites.”¹³⁷ In return, the Pakistanis share their human intelligence about militant activities in the tribal areas and other terrorist plots.¹³⁸ “Since 2001, U.S. and Pakistani intelligence and law enforcement services have conducted more than one hundred joint raids against suspected Taliban, al Qaeda, or other Islamist extremists.”¹³⁹

In 2010, Bob Woodward disclosed the existence of a well-armed 3,000-member

¹³² Ibid., 3.

¹³³ Josh Smith, “Advisers face reality checks along Afghan Border,” <http://www.stripes.com/advisers-face-reality-checks-along-afghan-border-1.220488> [accessed February 25 – May 10, 2013], 1.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹³⁵ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghan National Police (ANP),” <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghan-national-police-anp> [accessed February 25 – May 2009], 2.

¹³⁶ Craig Whitlock and Greg Miller, “Paramilitary force is key for CIA,” 2.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 2.

¹³⁸ Kimberly Dozier and Chris Brummit, “Pakistan, U.S. Tensions Spike after Border Closure,” http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2010/10/04/key_nato_supply_route_hit_again_in_pakistan/ [accessed February 25-October 4, 2010], 2.

¹³⁹ Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules,” 4.

Afghan paramilitary force collectively known as Counterterrorism Pursuit Teams in his book *Obama's Wars*. These teams are reportedly trained by the CIA at Firebase Lilley, in Paktika province, Afghanistan.¹⁴⁰ “In addition to being used for surveillance, raids, and combat operations in Afghanistan, the teams are crucial to the United States’ secret war in Pakistan, according to current and former U.S. officials.”¹⁴¹ A former senior CIA official involved in the formation of the Counterterrorism Pursuit Teams said the first unit was created in Kabul shortly after the U.S.-backed invasion in 2001.¹⁴² The team in the capital “remains the largest and most sophisticated, and it is routinely used to carry out operations elsewhere in the country.”¹⁴³

Over the past 10 years however, new units have been created in other locations, including Kandahar.¹⁴⁴ Their missions “vary from sensitive intelligence-gathering operations to carefully orchestrated takedowns of Taliban targets.”¹⁴⁵ Some of the Wikileaks reports leaked in 2010 provide descriptions of the activities of the “Other Government Agency” (OGA) and “Afghan OGA” forces.¹⁴⁶ In addition to accounts of snatch-and-grab operations targeting insurgent leaders, “the logs contain casualty reports from battles with the Taliban, summaries of electronic intercepts of enemy communications, and hints of heavy firepower at the CIA’s disposal.”¹⁴⁷

For several years now, the CIA has been running operations from its eastern Afghan bases, which are generally shared with U.S. SOF teams and other military units.

¹⁴⁰ Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, 261.

¹⁴¹ Craig Whitlock and Greg Miller, “Paramilitary force is key for CIA,” *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2010.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴³ Anthony Shaffer, *Operation Darkheart: Spycraft and Special Operations on the Front Lines of Afghanistan*, (Washington: MainStream Publishing, 2010), 94.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴⁵ Craig Whitlock and Greg Miller, “Paramilitary force is key for CIA,” 1.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

These bases “are also used by the agency to build and manage networks of ethnic Pashtun informants who cross into Pakistan’s tribal belt.”¹⁴⁸ The CIA has also used these bases for their drone programs. According to Craig Whitlock and Greg Miller, “the use of these bases has allowed the CIA to identify the whereabouts of al Qaeda and Taliban leaders. This has led to an exponential increase in drone attacks against AQ and Taliban targets.”¹⁴⁹ At the same time, these bases and teams have helped to reduce the CIA’s dependence on the ISI.¹⁵⁰

Drone Wars

In recent years, missile strikes by armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have constituted the principle U.S. military activity inside Pakistani territory and along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Launched in 2004, “the CIA’s covert drone campaign to target and kill al Qaeda and Taliban commanders based in Pakistan’s lawless northwest has resulted in the death of dozens of lower-ranking militants and at least ten upper-level leaders within AQ and the Taliban.”¹⁵¹ Moreover, these strikes have forced militants to abandon satellite phones and large gatherings in favor of communicating by carrier and moving in small groups.¹⁵²

While unpopular among the Pakistani public, the drone strikes have become a weapon of choice for the United States’ campaign against insurgents and Islamic militants in FATA. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President Bush authorized the use of drones equipped with laser-guided Hellfire missiles to kill the leaders of AQ in Pakistan.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵¹ Bill Roggio, “The Covert U.S. Air Campaign in Pakistan,” <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes.php> [accessed February 13 – December 26, 2013], 2.

¹⁵² Peter Bergen & Katherine Tiedemann, “The Effects of the U.S. Drone Program in Pakistan,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67939/peter-bergen-and-katherine-tiedemann/washingtons-phantom-war> [accessed February 12 – July 01, 2011], 2.

The United States' fleet of drones includes Predators and the larger Reapers. According to Bill Roggio of the *Long War Journal*, the U.S. has carried out 354 strikes since the drone campaign began in 2004.¹⁵³

Between 2004 and the end of 2008, the Bush Administration authorized 46 strikes in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Provinces. A majority of these strikes (35) were carried out in 2008 after U.S. officials reached a quiet understanding with President Pervez Musharraf to allow U.S. forces to conduct drone strikes and hot pursuit operations in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, "there was mounting evidence that al Qaeda and affiliated groups were using FATA to train Westerners for attacks on American and European targets."¹⁵⁵ For instance, "the masterminds of the July 7, 2005, transit system attacks in London, which killed 52 people, had trained in the tribal regions."¹⁵⁶

Since assuming office, Obama has greatly accelerated the program, "likely as a result of better intelligence on the ground in Pakistan."¹⁵⁷ In 2009, the U.S. launched more than 53 drone strikes against militant targets in Pakistani territory.¹⁵⁸ This was more than the previous four years combined.¹⁵⁹ The number of drone strikes continued to surge in 2010 (117) and 2011 (64) as the Obama administration was seeking to complement the increase of U.S. combat troops inside Afghanistan with intensified operations in the Taliban sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan.

¹⁵³ Bill Roggio, "The Covert U.S. Air Campaign in Pakistan," <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes.php> [accessed February 13 – December 26, 2013], 2.

¹⁵⁴ Peter Bergen & Katherine Tiedeman, "Revenge of the Drones," http://www.newamerica.net/publications/policy/revenge_of_the_drones [accessed February 13-October 19, 2009], 3

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

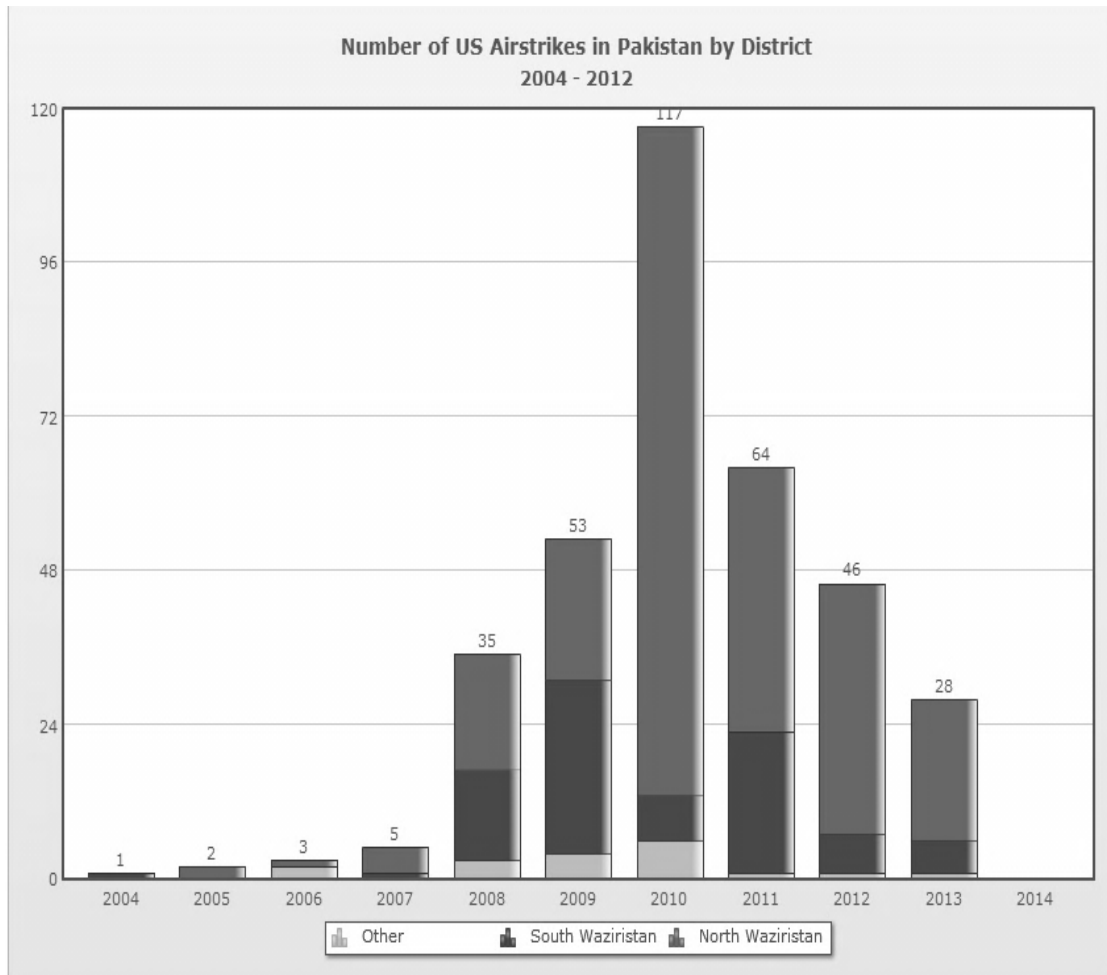
¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵⁷ Sara Birkenthal, "U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis," <http://www.cmc.edu/keck/student/Birkenthal%20Fellowship%20Paper.pdf> [accessed February 11 - December 2012], 9.

¹⁵⁸ Bill Roggio, "The Covert U.S. Air Campaign in Pakistan," 2.

¹⁵⁹ Bill Roggio, "The Covert U.S. Air Campaign in Pakistan," 3.

Figure 9: Number of U.S. Airstrikes in Pakistan by District 2004-2014



Source: Roggio, Bill, “The Covert U.S. Air Campaign in Pakistan,” p.2 <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes.php>

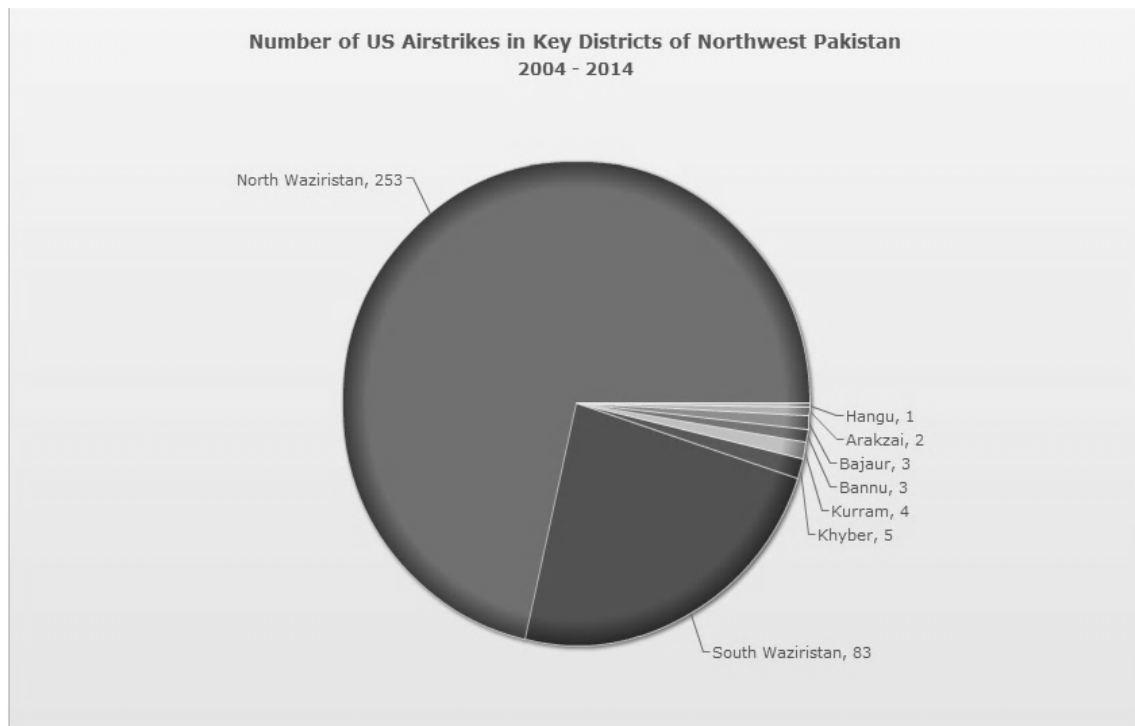
Over the past six years, a majority of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan have targeted Islamist militants operating in North Waziristan,¹⁶⁰ a FATA in northwestern Pakistan that borders Afghanistan. According to Jeffrey Dressler, “North Waziristan hosts a blend of insurgents and terrorists operating against Pakistan and Afghanistan, with some also targeting the American homeland.”¹⁶¹ Enemy groups based there include: “the Haqqani Network; powerful tribal enablers; foreign extremists; and the Pakistani Taliban (TTP),

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶¹ Jeffrey Dressler, “A Dangerous Mix: Militant Groups in North Waziristan,” <http://www.criticalthreats.org/pakistan/dangerous-mix-militant-groups-north-waziristan-june-1-2011> [accessed February 14 – June 1, 2011], 1.

who have been at war with the Pakistani state for much of the past decade.”¹⁶² Out of the 354 drone strikes that have occurred in Pakistan since 2004, 253 of them have struck AQ and Taliban targets in North Waziristan.¹⁶³

Figure 10: Number of U.S. Airstrikes in Key Districts of Northwest Pakistan



Source: Roggio, Bill, “The Covert U.S. Air Campaign in Pakistan,” (2013) p.2, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes.php>

The United States has also carried out a large number of drone strikes (83) in the neighboring province of South Waziristan. Shortly after the invasion of Afghanistan by U.S. and NATO forces in October 2001, “thousands of Afghan Taliban along with their al Qaeda allies fled to South Waziristan looking for refuge and bases to continue their fight against the foreign forces occupying their country.”¹⁶⁴ The local tribes, sympathetic to the cause, provided shelter and assistance to the fighters, while local militants who

¹⁶² Ibid., 1.

¹⁶³ Bill Roggio, “The Covert U.S. Air Campaign in Pakistan,” 3.

¹⁶⁴ Mansur Khan Mahsud, “The Battle for Pakistan: South Waziristan,” http://newamerica.net/publications/policy/the_battle_for_pakistan_south_waziristan [accessed February 14 – April 19, 2010], 5.

were affiliated with the Afghan Taliban government before September 11--such as Abdullah Mehsud, Baitullah Mehsud, Nek Muhammad, Haji Sharif, and Haji Omar--began to organize local Taliban groups across South Waziristan.¹⁶⁵

Since 2004, the U.S. has killed a number of prominent al Qaeda and Taliban leaders, including: Abu Laith al Libi, senior military commander in Afghanistan and the leader of al Qaeda's paramilitary Shadow Army (2008); Sa'ad bin Laden, one of Osama bin Laden's sons who served as a senior AQ leader in Iran and was involved in several plots (2009); Baitullah Mehsud, the overall leader of the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan (2009); Ilyas Kashmiri, the leader of al Qaeda's Lashkar al Zil and the operational commander of the Harakat ul Jihad-i-Islami (2011); and Mullah Sangeen Zadran, the deputy of the Haqqani Network operational commander Sirajuddin Haqqani (2013).¹⁶⁶ According to *The Long War Journal*, "American drones have killed more than 1,900 Islamist insurgents in Pakistan's FATA areas since 2006."¹⁶⁷ As a result of these strategically significant deaths, "then-CIA director Leon Panetta called drone strikes "one of the most important weapons in the fight against terrorists."¹⁶⁸

The Pakistani government "regularly issues protests over the strikes—and the perception that they violate Pakistani sovereignty fuels considerable anti-American sentiment among the Pakistani public."¹⁶⁹ Despite these protests, the Pakistani Government has never ordered the Pakistani Air Force to shoot down the drones.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 5.

¹⁶⁶ Bill Roggio & Alexander Mayer. "Senior al Qaeda and Taliban leaders killed in U.S. airstrikes in Pakistan, 2004-2013." <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes-hvts.php> [accessed February 14 - December 26, 2013], 6.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Gregor Peter Schmitz, "Are Drones Worth Their Drawbacks?" *Der Spiegel*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-debate-on-push-button-war-are-drones-worth-their-drawbacks-a-682645.html> [accessed February 14 – March 12, 2010], 1.

¹⁶⁹ Richard Weitz, "Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules: The U.S. Role," http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicn/eurasia_border_review/abr3/weitz.pdf [accessed February 20- November 27, 2011], 21.

According to Sara Birkenthal (2012), “global outcry over the drone campaign has also intensified in response to collateral civilian deaths brought by errant air strikes in the country.”¹⁷⁰ An analysis published by Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann in *Foreign Affairs* shows that “less than two percent of those killed by U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan have been described in reliable press accounts as leaders of al Qaeda or allied groups.”¹⁷¹ U.S. government officials have disputed such reports, “claiming that only 50 non-militants have been killed by drone strikes over the past decade in six countries in which the United States is known to have used Predator and Reaper drones in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen.”¹⁷²

Members of the Pakistani Taliban “also cite the continuing UAV strikes to justify their terrorist campaign against Pakistanis living outside the tribal zone.”¹⁷³ Although unarmed Pakistani civilians are usually the targets of their attacks, the TTP claims that these bombings are in retaliation for the Pakistani governments’ allowing the United States to operate the drones on their territory. On March 30th, 2009, “a terrorist assault team estimated in size at 14 men launched a coordinated attack on the Manawan Police Trainers School in Lahore that resulted in 34 deaths.”¹⁷⁴

According to Baitullah Mehsud, the former leader of the Pakistani Taliban, the Taliban’s March 2009 attack on the police academy was ‘in retaliation for the continued drone strikes by the U.S. in collaboration with Pakistan on our people.’¹⁷⁵ Mehsud, himself, would later on be killed in a drone strike on August 5, 2009. Another report

¹⁷⁰ Sara Birkenthal, “U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis,” 10.

¹⁷¹ Peter Bergen & Katherine Tiedemann, “There Were More Drone Strikes,” 3.

¹⁷² Greg Jaffe and Karen DeYoung, “U.S. Drone Targets Two Leaders of Somalia Group Allied With Al Qaeda, Officials Say,” *The Washington Post*, June 29, 2011 seen in Sarah Birkenthal, “U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis,” 15.

¹⁷³ Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules,” 8.

¹⁷⁴ Bill Roggio, “Terrorist Storm Lahore Police Academy, Kill More than Thirty,” 1.

¹⁷⁵ Peter Bergen & Katherine Tiedeman, “Revenge of the Drones,” 6.

written by Qandeel Siddique (2010), finds that the “growing number of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan’s border areas, and expanding U.S. presence and influence inside Pakistan has further aggravated the jihadists.”¹⁷⁶

Despite criticism surrounding their use, “UAVs amount to safer, cheaper, and more effective warfare in the United States’ counterterrorism efforts in Pakistan, as consistently argued by the Department of Defense.”¹⁷⁷ Moreover, sending U.S. combat troops into Pakistani territory could spark outrage in throughout the country. On one such occasion, “a U.S. SOF team attacked a suspected terrorist base in Pakistan’s South Waziristan region, killing over a dozen people.”¹⁷⁸ These attacks sparked outrage and massive protests throughout the country. In response to this raid, the Pakistani military announced on September 16, 2008, “that it would shoot at U.S. forces attempting to cross the Afghan-Pakistan border.”¹⁷⁹ Since then, “several minor incidents have occurred when members of Pakistan’s Frontier Corps have fired at what they believed to be American helicopters flying from Afghanistan to deploy Special Forces on their territory.”¹⁸⁰

Strategically, “killing terrorist operatives through drone strikes has proven effective in dismantling terrorist havens along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.”¹⁸¹ Such attacks “keep extremist groups on edge and disrupt their plans, because when individuals in these groups die or are wounded, new members must be recruited and less experienced

¹⁷⁶ Qandeel Siddique, “Tehrik-E-Taliban Pakistan: An Attempt to Deconstruct the Umbrella Organization and the Reasons for Its Growth in Pakistan’s North-West,” http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2010-12-Tehrik-e-Taliban_web.odf [accessed February 16-December 2010], 23.

¹⁷⁷ Brianna Lee, “Five Things You Need to Know About Drones,” <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/need-to-know/five-things/drones/12659/> [accessed February 16 – September 13, 2012], 1 in Sarah Birkenthal, “U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis,” 15.

¹⁷⁸ Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules,” 9

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸⁰ Richard Stevenson, “Pakistani Troops Fire on U.S. Soldiers near Afghan Border, Reports Say,” *The Guardian*, September 15, 2008, seen in Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules, The U.S. Role,” http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicn/eurasia_border_review/eb3/weitz.pdf [accessed February 24- Spring 2012] 9.

¹⁸¹ Sara Birkenthal, “U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis,” 23

leaders are forced to take over day-to-day operations.”¹⁸² Terrorist or insurgent groups fearing a strike or an attack “must also devote increased attention to their own security because any time they communicate with other cells, they may be exposing themselves to a targeted attack.”¹⁸³

According to memorandums between Osama bin Laden and his subordinates, made public by the U.S. military’s Combating Terrorism Center, crippling U.S. drone attacks had forced bin Laden to consider withdrawing his fighters from what had previously been safe havens in Pakistan. “The reserves will not, for the most part, be effective in such conflicts. Basically, we could lose the reserves to the enemy’s air strikes. We cannot fight air strikes with explosives!” Moreover, he said that commanders with experience “needed to get out of the area.”¹⁸⁴

Despite resting on morally questionable footing, the U.S. drone campaign in Pakistan “has been arguably one of the most effective tactics against Islamist militants operating in the remote regions of western Pakistan.”¹⁸⁵ However, until the Pakistanis do something about the safe havens in FATA, insurgent and terrorist groups such as the Afghan Taliban, Haqqani Network, and al Qaeda will continue to recruit, train, equip, and prepare to launch attacks against U.S., ISAF, and Afghan forces from within Pakistan.

¹⁸² Daniel L. Byman, “Do Target killings Work?,” <https://sgsnow.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/targetedkillings.pdf> [accessed February 24 –July 14, 2009], 105 seen in Sara Birkenthal, “U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis,” 17.

¹⁸³ Daniel L. Byman, “Do Target killings Work?,” <https://sgsnow.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/targetedkillings.pdf> [accessed February 24 –July 14, 2009], 105 seen in Sara Birkenthal, “U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis,” 17.

¹⁸⁴ The Combatting Terrorism Center, *The Osama bin Laden Files*, (Dover: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012), 112.

¹⁸⁵ K. Alan Kronstadt, “Pakistan-U.S. Relations,” 21.

CHAPTER V: MEASURING SECURITY PROGRESS DURING THE SURGE

We've got our teeth in the enemy's jugular now, and we're not going to let go.

-General David Petraeus

According to *FM 3-24*, “counterinsurgency is an extremely complex form of warfare. At its core, COIN is a struggle for the population’s support.”¹ In almost every case, counterinsurgents “face a populace containing an active minority supporting the government and equally small militant faction opposing it.”² The government must “demonstrate that it can fight the insurgents effectively while also protecting the population.”³ Insurgents on the other hand, “only have to demonstrate that the government is unable to protect the population by inflicting enough chaos and destruction to turn public support against the existing authorities.”⁴

Upon review, the United States’ counterinsurgency and accompanying surge strategy made substantial progress in the southern parts of Afghanistan.⁵ Prior to the surge in 2010, the Taliban and its allies made startling gains, “showing an ability to control territory in Helmand and Kandahar they had previously lost.”⁶ The surge reversed those gains as U.S. and ISAF forces conducted more than 7,100 counterterrorism missions between May 30th and December 2nd, 2010. During these operations, more than

¹ U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 1-28.

² Elliot Cohen, Jan Horvath, and John Nagl, “Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency,” 49.

³ John A. Lynn, “Patterns of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/mlireview/lynn.pdf> [accessed March 17-July/August 2005], 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “The Afghan Surge is Over,” http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/25/the_afghan_surge_is_over [accessed April 24-September 25, 2012], 4

⁶ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 1.

than 600 insurgent leaders were captured or killed.¹ In addition more than 2000 enemy fighters were killed and over 4,100 captured.²

To gauge the overall impact of the U.S.'s counterinsurgency and accompanying surge strategy, this study consulted several sources: monthly data compiled by NATO's International Security Assistance Force, data gathered by the DoD for its semiannual annual report to Congress (Report on Progress: Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan), and annual reports produced by the United Nations. These sources are not all consistent with one another in the specifics, "as they each have their own criteria to hold territory, which is difficult to quantify, but is nonetheless important."³ For instance, "the Taliban were much stronger overall prior to 2001, when the group controlled Afghanistan and did not have to function as an insurgency."⁴ Therefore, "the various statistics used to measure the insurgency's efficacy offer only a part of the overall picture."⁵

IED Attacks: The \$30 Bombs that Cost the U.S. Billions

One security indicator that U.S. and ISAF forces used to measure progress during the surge in Afghanistan was the number of IED attacks that occurred between January 2010 and December 2012. Since 2006, "IEDs have become the Taliban's favored weapon of choice and the biggest killer of Coalition soldiers and Afghan civilians."⁶ According to documents released by WikiLeaks, "in 2004, there were 308 makeshift bombs in 2004: in

¹ Bill Roggio, "Special Operations Forces Deal Blows to Taliban Ranks," http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/12special_operations_f.php [accessed March 17 – December 9, 2010], 1.

² Ibid., 1.

³ Bill Roggio, "Special Operations Forces Deal Blows to Taliban Ranks," http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/12special_operations_f.php [accessed March 17 – December 9, 2010], 2.

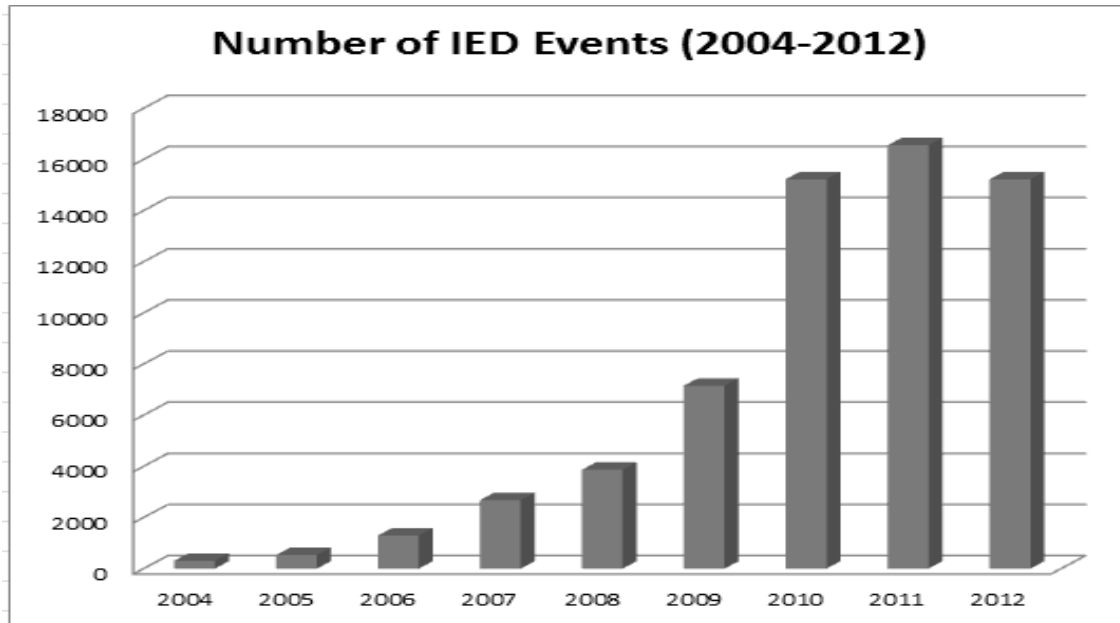
⁴ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, "Analysis The Taliban's 'momentum' has not been broken," 2.

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ Rob Evans, "Afghanistan war logs: How the IED became Taliban's weapon of choice," <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/25/ieds-improvised-explosive-device-deaths> [accessed March 17-July 25, 2010], 1.

2009 there were 7,155.⁷ Taliban fighters in total planted more than 16,000 IEDs in those five years.”⁸

Figure 11: Number of IED Events (2004-2012)



Source: Brookings Institute, “Afghan Index,” as January 15, 2013, p. 11, <http://www.brookings.edu/media/Programs/foreign%20policy/afghanistan%20index/index20130131.pdf>

During an interview with *USA Today* in July 2009, General McChrystal argued “the best way to defeat IEDs will be to defeat the Taliban’s hold on the people.”⁹ In the fall of 2009, McChrystal ordered his commanders to increase the number of dismounted patrols being conducted by U.S. and ISAF forces. “The Taliban responded by increasing the number of improvised explosive devices targeting dismounted patrols from 71 in September 2009 to 228 by January 2010.”¹⁰

Unfortunately, these numbers foreshadowed a deadly trend that was only about to get worse. According to the Civil Military Fusion Center, the number of IED events in

⁷ Ibid., 1.

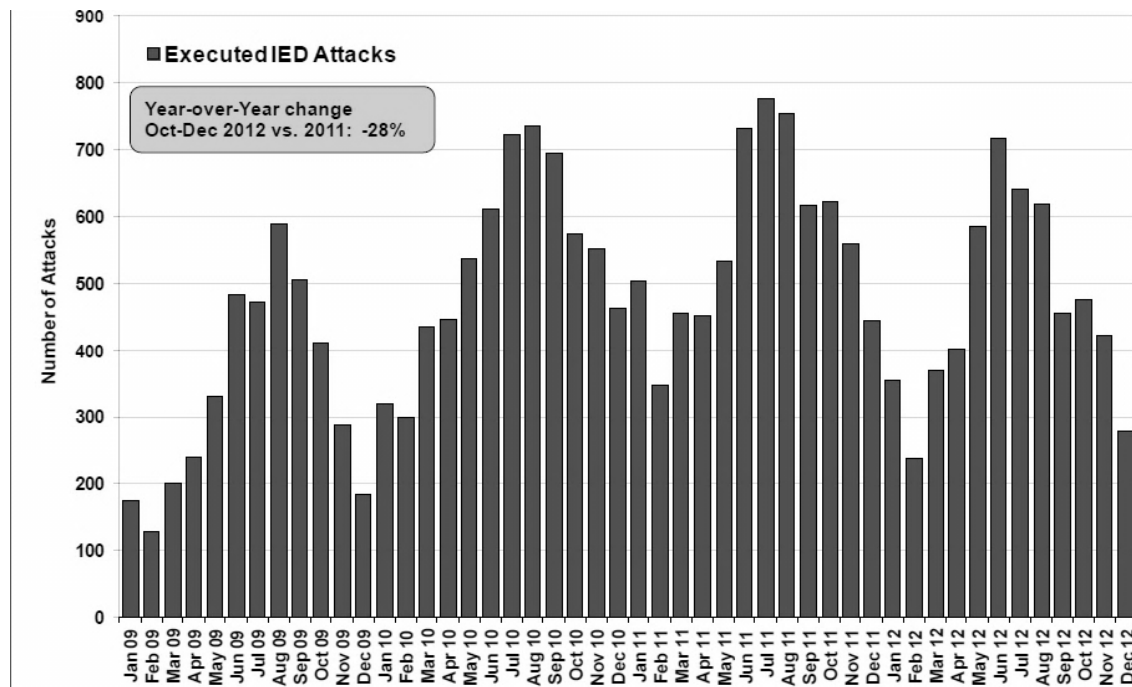
⁸ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 3.

⁹ Gareth Porter, “How the U.S. Quietly Lost the IED War in Afghanistan,” <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012.10/how-the-u-s-quietly-lost-the-ied-war-in-afghanistan/> [accessed March 17 – October 9, 2012], 2.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

Afghanistan increased to over 15,225 in 2010.¹¹ “This is a 62 percent increase over 2009 and more than three times as many as the year before.”¹² The number of American troops killed by roadside bombs in 2010 soared by 60 percent, while the number of those wounded almost tripled.¹³ The number of IED events continued to rise in 2011, as more than 16,554 IEDs detonated or were cleared that year. The number of IED events in 2011 was a new record and represented a nine percent increase from 2010. U.S. fatalities did fall that year from 257 in 2010 to 196 in 2011, and overall fatalities fell from 499 to 418.¹⁴

Figure 12: Executed IED Attacks Nationwide Monthly Attacks



Source: Afghan Mission Network (AMN) Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) Database as of January 12, 2013, p.5. http://augengeradeaus.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ISAF_Monthly_Trends_Dec2012.

¹¹ Civil Military Fusion Center, “Improvised Explosive Devices: A Global Review January & February 2012,” https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Security/CFC_IED-Trends-and-Issues_March2012.pdf [accessed March 17 – March 2012], 1.

¹² Ibid., 1.

¹³ Craig Whitlock, “Number of U.S. Casualties from Roadside Bombs in Afghanistan Skyrocketed from 2009 to 2010,” <http://www.afghanistannewscenter.com/news/2011/january/jan262011.html#61>. [accessed March 18 – January 25], 1.

¹⁴ Ibid., 1.

Beginning in 2012, the number of IED attacks began to drop in Afghanistan with February 2012 representing one of the best months since the beginning of the surge in 2010.¹⁵ Overall, “there were 15,222 incidents in 2012, an 8 percent decline from their record high in 2011.”¹⁶ These numbers (15,222) are very similar to the number of IED events that occurred in 2010 (15,225).¹⁷ Moreover, fewer U.S. troops (104) were killed by IEDs in 2012 than in 2011 (183), a 57% decline.¹⁸ Bombs wounded fewer troops too, from 3,542 in 2011 to 1,744 in 2012, a 50% drop.¹⁹ Afghan troops however, suffered a “124% increase in the number of IED attacks against them in 2012.”²⁰

U.S. IED Casualties

According to the Pentagon’s Defense Casualty Analysis System and iCasualties, the U.S. military suffered a total of 14,627 casualties between 2009 and 2011. Of that total 8,680 or 59 percent were from IED explosions.²¹ Since 2006, “the United States has spent \$18 billion dollars on high-tech solutions aimed at detecting and protecting soldiers from IEDs including robots, armored vehicles, high-tech surveillance gear, and blimps with spy cameras.”²² Despite these efforts, the number of IED casualties rose dramatically between 2008 and 2012. As shown in Figure 13, only 96 U.S. service members were killed by IEDs between dramatically between 2008 and 2012.

In 2008, the number of casualties caused by IEDs jumped to 84, this represents

¹⁵ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 3.

¹⁶ DoD, “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” http://www.defense.gov/pubs/Section_1230_Report_July_2013.pdf [accessed March 18 – July 2013], 19.

¹⁷ Ibid., 19.

¹⁸ Tom Vanden Brook, “Coalition Death from IED Attacks Soar in Afghanistan,” http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/military/2009-03-08-IED_N.htm [accessed December 23 – March 9, 2009], 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., 1.

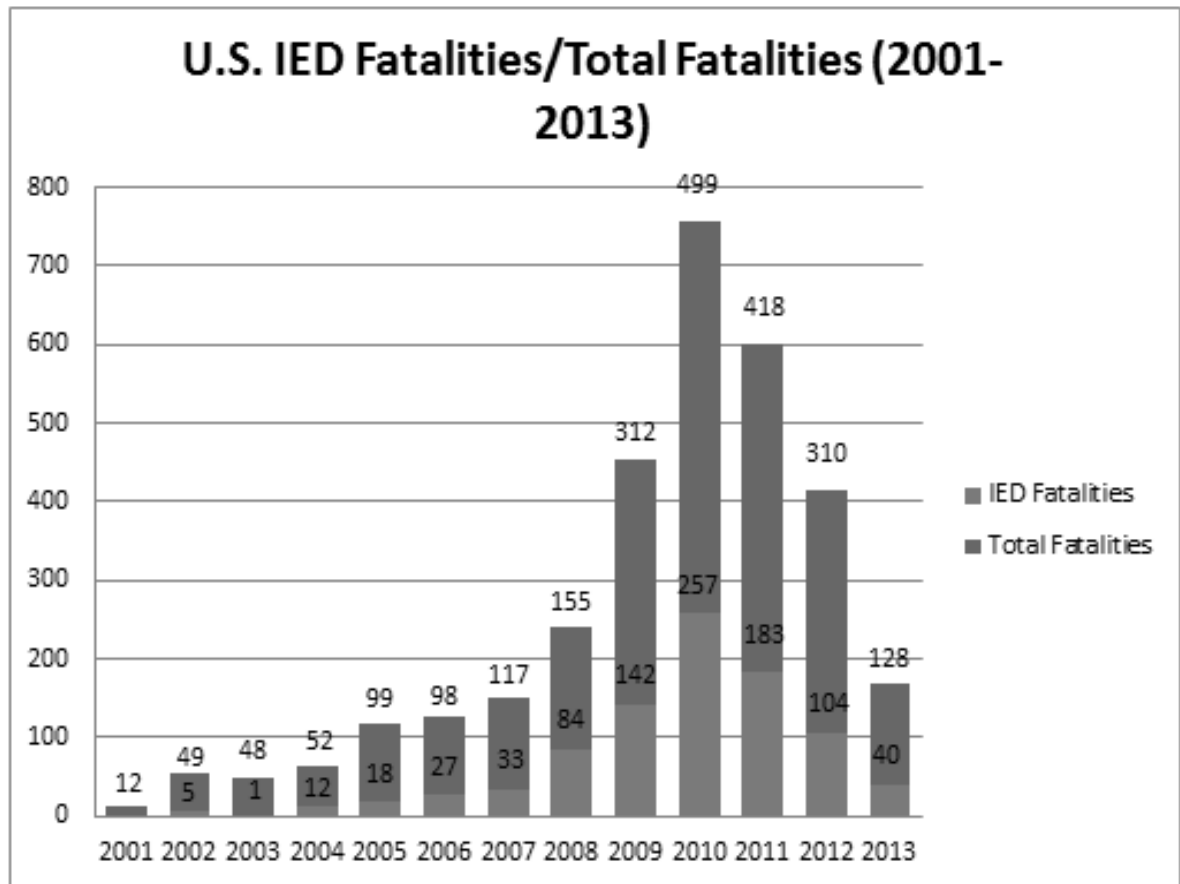
²⁰ Ibid., 1.

²¹ Gareth Porter, “U.S. Losing IED war in Afghanistan,” 3.

²² John M. Doyle “The Spreading Threat of Roadside Bombs and other Improvised Explosive Devices,” <http://www.idga.org/communications-engineering-and-it/articles/the-spreading-threat-of-roadside-bombs-and-other-i/> [accessed March 18 – January 02, 2013], 1.

54.2% of all U.S. fatalities for that year.²³ By 2009, the number of IED fatalities almost doubled to 142, a 59% increase from the previous year. Unfortunately, the number of IED casualties continued to rise in 2010, “reaching a record high of 257 fatalities. Of the 499 U.S. fatalities that year, over 51.5 percent were caused by IEDs.”²⁴

Figure 13: U.S. IED Fatalities/Total Fatalities in Afghanistan (2001-2013)



Source: Brookings Institute, “The Afghan Index,” p. 11, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Programs/foreign%20policy/afghanistan%20index/index20140227.pdf>

Despite an increase in the number of IED events in 2011, (16,554), U.S. fatalities did fall that year from 257 in 2010 to 196 in 2011, and overall fatalities fell from 499 to 418.²⁵ With the United States and NATO handing over security responsibility to ANSF

²³ John M. Doyle “The Spreading Threat of Roadside Bombs and other Improvised Explosive Devices,” 2.

²⁴ Ibid., 2.

²⁵ Brookings Institute, “The Afghan Index,” <http://www.brookings.edu/media/Programs/foreign%20policy/afghanistan%20index/index20120227.pdf> [accessed March 18 – February 27, 2012], 11.

forces and taking more of an advisory role in 2012, the number of IED fatalities continued to decline in 2012.²⁶ According to statistics released by the Pentagon, “only 104 U.S. troops were killed by IEDs in 2012, compared with 196 in 2011, a 57% decline. IED casualties accounted for 33.5 percent of all U.S. troops killed that year.”²⁷

Even though the number of U.S. casualties caused by IEDs dropped by more than 8 percent in 2012, a decrease in fatalities may not always tell the full story.²⁸ According to Bill Roggio of *The Long War Journal*, “attacks were down overall nationwide in 2012 as Afghan forces were pushed to the fore.”²⁹ While the number of U.S. casualties in Afghanistan dropped by more than 60% between 2012 and 2013, the number of Afghan troops killed in combat shot up almost 80%.³⁰ “This is likely in response to ANSF forces taking an increased role in combat operations as well as the ongoing decrease in the number of international forces in the country.”³¹ In 2013, 95% of all conventional operations were carried out by Afghan forces as well as 98% of all special operations missions.³² Thus, “casualties are not the best way to judge the strength or weakness of an insurgency.”³³

Afghan Civilian IED Casualties

Since 2009, IEDs in Afghanistan have killed or injured 12,504 civilians.³⁴ Compared

²⁶ Ibid., 11.

²⁷ David Wood, IED Blasts Spike In Afghanistan War As The Wounded Flow Home, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/26/ied-afghanistan-war-veterans_n_1705397.html [accessed March 18-July 26, 2012], 1.

²⁸ Rowan Scarborough, U.S. troops winning war against IEDs of Taliban, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/may/24/us-troops-winning-war-against-ieds-of-taliban/?page=all> [accessed March 18-May 24, 2012], 1.

²⁹ Ibid., 1.

³⁰ The Guardian.Com “Afghan Troop Deaths up almost 80% in 2013 Fighting Season says Pentagon,” 1.

³¹ Ibid., 1.

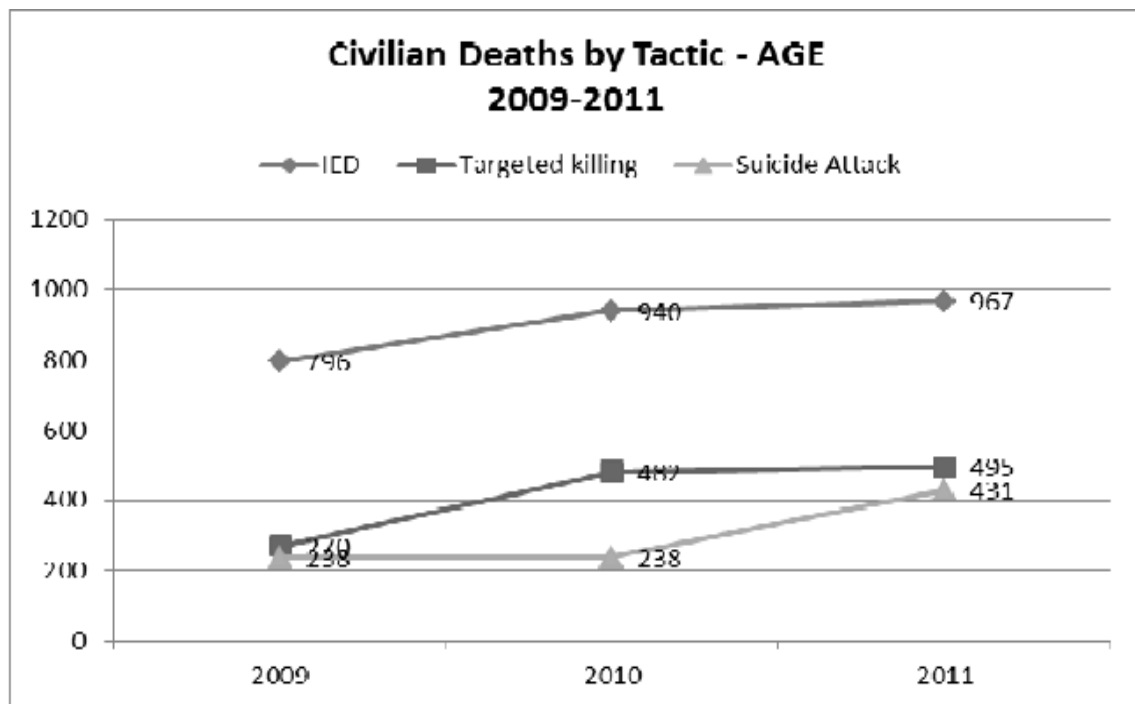
³² DoD, “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” http://www.defense.gov/pubs/Section_1230_Report_November_2013.pdf [accessed March 18 – November 2013], 74.

³³ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/> [accessed March 17 – December 9, 2010], 4.

³⁴ UNAMA, “2013 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” <http://unama.unmissions.org>

to 2009, “the number of civilian casualties increased by more than 40 percent in 2010.”³⁵ According to UNAMA, IED attacks accounted for the majority of civilians killed in 2010. “This dramatic increase in the use of IEDs in 2010, even when targeting a legitimate military object disproportionately harmed civilians.”³⁶ More than 511 civilians were killed in the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar in 2010.³⁷

Figure 14: Civilian Death by Tactic (2009-2011)



Source: “2011 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” p.11, http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012.pdf

Upon review, “there were more than 1,281 IED incidents in the southern region of Afghanistan in 2010.”³⁸ The Helmand districts of Lashkar Gah and Nad Ali (including Marjah) “saw the most civilian casualties in the province, with 40 per cent and 16 per

Org/Portals /UNAMA/human%20rights/Feb_8_2014_PoC-report_2013-Full-report-ENG.pdf
[accessed March 18 – February 2014], 16.

³⁵ Ibid., 16.

³⁶ UNAMA, “2010 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012 [accessed March 18 – March 2011], 6.

³⁷ Ibid., 6.

³⁸ Ibid., 6.

cent respectively of civilian casualties caused by IEDs.”³⁹ All of these areas where the focus of intense counterinsurgency efforts by U.S. and ISAF forces in 2010.

IEDs continued to be the Taliban’s weapon of choice in 2011 as UNAMA recorded more than 967 civilian deaths and 1,586 injuries from IEDs that year.⁴⁰ A majority of the civilians killed by IEDs were killed by victim –activated pressure plate IEDs (PPIEDs).⁴¹ PPIEDs in Afghanistan are set to explode when they are walked on or driven over with a trigger weight between 10 kg and 100kg.⁴² “The majority of PPIEDs in Afghanistan have approximately 20 kg of explosives, more than twice the explosive content of a standard anti-tank mine yet, they have the trigger of an anti-personnel mine.”⁴³ This means that “every PPIED acts as a massive anti-personnel landmine with the capability of destroying a tank; civilians who step on or drive over these IEDS have no defense against them and little chance of survival.”⁴⁴

The number of Afghan civilians killed by IEDs continued to rise sharply in 2012, “with a three percent increase compared to 2011.”⁴⁵ Between January 1st and December 31st, 2012, “UNAMA documented 782 IED incidents (more than two IEDs per day causing civilian casualties in 2012) which resulted in 2,531 civilian casualties (868 civilian deaths and 1,663 injuries).”⁴⁶ UNAMA also observed “that in most cases of

³⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁰ UNAMA, “2011 Annual Report on Protection Civilians in Armed Conflict,” http://unama.unmissions.org//Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/Feb_8_2014_PoC-report_2013-Full-report-ENG.pdf [accessed March 18-February 2012], 17.

⁴¹ Ibid., 17.

⁴² The Long War Journal, “Anatomy of an IED,” <http://www.longwarjournal.org/nultimedia/IED-Anatomy/index.html> [accessed March 18- August 2006], 5.

⁴³ Clay Wilson, “Improvised Explosive Devices in Iraq and Afghanistan: Effects and Countermeasures,” <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/RS22330.pdf> [accessed March 18-August 28, 2007], 5.

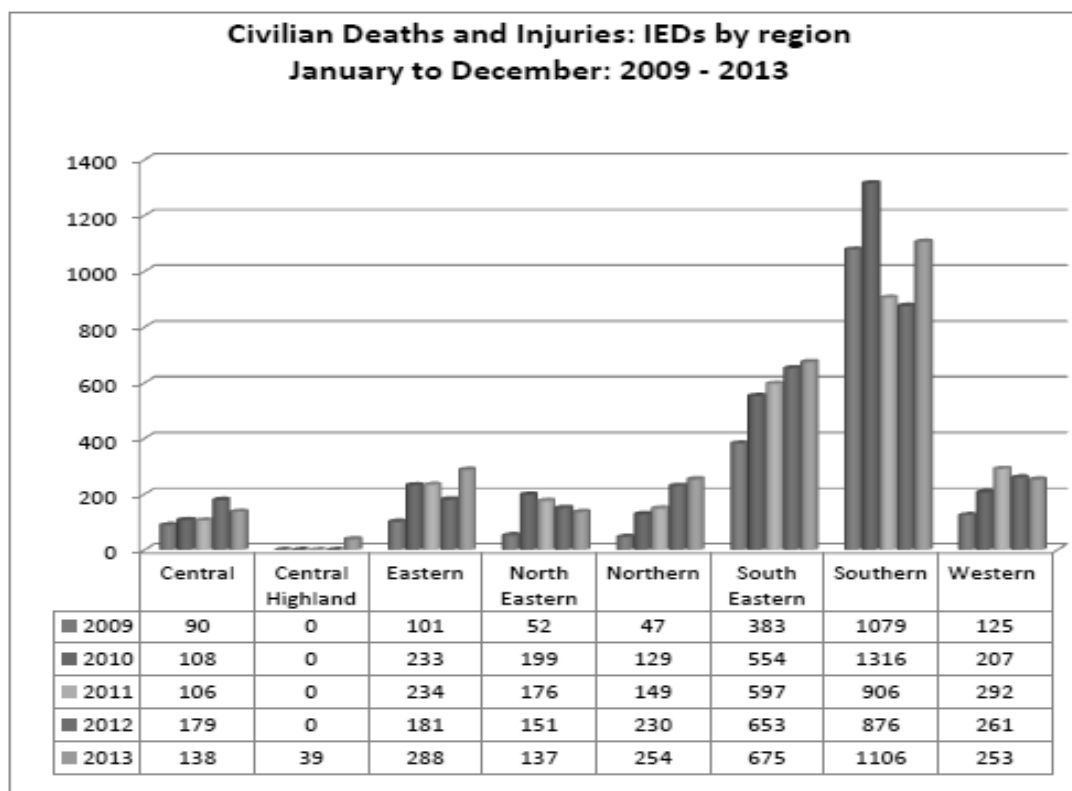
⁴⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁵ UNAMA, “2012 Annual Report on Protection Civilians in Armed Conflict,” http://unama.unmissions.org//Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/Feb_8_2014_PoC-report_2013-Full-report-ENG.pdf [accessed March 18-February 2013], 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 17.

civilian casualties caused by IEDs, the device appeared not to have been directed at specific military objectives or was used in a way that its effects were indiscriminate and in violation of international humanitarian law.”⁴⁷ For example, “UNAMA confirmed 298 incidents causing 913 civilian casualties (393 deaths and 520 injuries) from PPIEDs which had been planted on roads and footpaths frequently used by civilians.”⁴⁸ This is a huge increase compared to 2011 when UNAMA documented 74 killed and 67 injured by this tactic.⁴⁹

Figure 15: Civilian Deaths and Injuries: IEDs by Region (2009-2013)



Source: UNAMA, “2012 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” p.17 http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/Feb_8_2014_PoC-report_2013-Full-report-ENG.pdf

The majority of IEDs used by the Taliban and other insurgent groups were victim-activated IEDs (VAIEDs). “The prevalence of VAIEDs is highest in the southern

⁴⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 17.

provinces of Afghanistan, where they constituted the vast majority of IEDs used.”⁵⁰ The Taliban released several statements in 2012 denying the use of IEDs to target civilians indiscriminately.⁵¹

Afghan Civilian Casualties and the U.S./ISAF Failure to Protect the Population

Another security indicator U.S. and ISAF forces used to track positive trends made during the surge was the number of civilians killed or injured. The first principle of COIN doctrine “is the need to secure the indigenous population in areas deemed centers of gravity, politically, economically, and militarily.”⁵² According to David Kilcullen, “in areas where there is a high level of Afghan-on-Afghan violence the population is very unlikely to feel safe enough to put their weapons down and join in peaceful negotiations or support for the government.”⁵³ Also, “a spike in Afghan-on-Afghan violence in a particular area probably correlates to a drop in public confidence.”⁵⁴ Supporters of the surge argued that “behind the protective shield of increasing numbers of ISAF and Afghan security forces, good government would emerge, the rule of law would take root and prosperity would grow.”⁵⁵

During his June 2009, testimony before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, General Stanley McChrystal discussed how civilian casualties affect popular perception and behavior.

“I would emphasize that how we conduct operations is vital to success...This is a struggle for the support of the Afghan people. Our willingness to operate in ways

⁵⁰ Ibid. 18

⁵¹ Ibid., 18.

⁵² Karl W. Eikenberry, “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan-The Other Side of COIN,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139645/karl-w-eikenberry/the-limits-of-counterinsurgency-doctrine-in-afghanistan> [accessed March 18-September/October 2013], 1.

⁵³ David Kilcullen, “Measuring Progress in Afghanistan,” <http://literature-index.wikispaces.com/file/view/Kilcullen-COIN+Metrics.pdf> [accessed March 18-February 8, 2010], 21.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁵ Karl W. Eikenberry, “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan, 2.

that minimize casualties or damage, even when doing so makes our task more difficult, is essential to our credibility.”⁵⁶

Then-Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, expressed the same opinion before Congress.

“But I will tell you that I believe that the civilian casualties are doing us enormous harm in Afghanistan, and we have got to do better in terms of avoiding casualties. And I say knowing full well that the Taliban mingle among the people, use them as barriers. But when we go ahead and attack, we play right into their hands.”⁵⁷

When Afghans were asked what the main problems in their area were, most respondents stated that ISAF was not able to protect them “24/7”, both physically and psychologically.⁵⁸ Even though U.S. and ISAF forces conduct daily patrols and other operations to clear insurgents from their hideouts, these groups return during the night after Coalition forces have returned to their bases. “Insurgents take advantage of this by extending their influence through intimidation and attacks on civilians and the infrastructure they use.”⁵⁹ This fact turns the local population against ISAF and the Afghan government “as they are not able to live up to the promises of security.”⁶⁰ Moreover, ‘it is the consensus view among NATO intelligence that the inadvertent killing of civilians is one of the two or three things, along with corruption and favoritism perhaps, that most help the Taliban in recruiting.”⁶¹

Afghan Civilian Casualties in 2010

According to United Nation’s “Afghanistan: Annual Report 2012, Protection of

⁵⁶ Noah Shachtman, “New Top General Could Mean Changes for Afghan Airstrikes,” <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/06/new-top-general-could-mean-changes-for-afghan-airstrikes/> [accessed March 18-June 05, 2009], 2.

⁵⁷ Luke N. Condra, “The Effect of Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq,” https://www.princeton.edu/~jns/papers/CFIS_CIVCAS_OCT2010.pdf [accessed March 18-October 14, 2010], 8.

⁵⁸ Robert Beljan, “Afghanistan: Lessons Learned from an ISAF Perspective,” 16.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁶¹ Luke N. Condra, “The Effect of Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq,” 9.

Civilians in Armed Conflict”, the numbers of civilian casualties (both dead and injured) has risen dramatically since 2009.⁶² Before the surge in 2010, “UNAMA estimated that more than 2,412 civilians were killed in 2009.”⁶³ However, the number of civilians killed in Afghanistan increased by more than 15% in 2010.⁶⁴ In total, more than 2,777 Afghan civilians were killed that year. “The overall rise in civilian deaths can be attributed to the increased use of IEDs and targeted assassinations by insurgents and intensified military operations particularly in southern Afghanistan.”⁶⁵

Although the majority of fighting in 2010 occurred in the southern and southeastern regions, the insecurity of the conflict continued to spread to the northern, eastern, and western regions. All regions apart from the eastern region experienced major increases in the number of civilians killed compared to 2009.⁶⁶ “The northern region saw an intensification of fighting throughout the year with the number of civilians killed increased by 76 percent compared to 2009.”⁶⁷ Both the southern and southeastern regions saw a rise in the number of civilian deaths compared to 2009, “with a 21 percent and 40 percent increase respectively.”⁶⁸

Upon review of Figure 16, more than 2,080 civilians were killed by Anti-Government Elements in 2010. This represents 75% of all Afghan civilians killed that year.⁶⁹ In total, the Taliban and other insurgent groups were responsible for 5,446 civilian casualties in 2010. IEDs, suicide attacks, assassinations and executions, intimidation,

⁶² UNAMA, “2010 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012 [accessed March 18 – March 2011], 5.

⁶³ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 6.

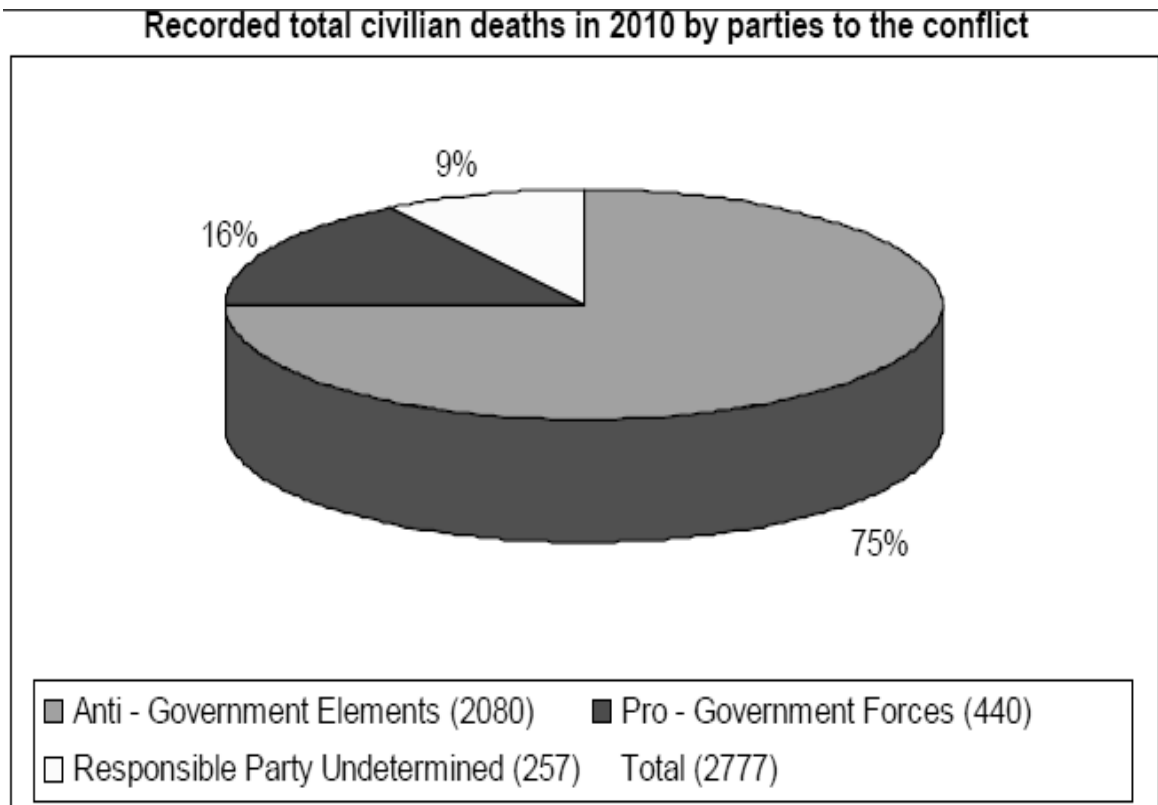
⁶⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 8.

harassment, and abductions were the main tactics used by the Taliban to undermine support for ISAF and the Afghan government.⁷⁰

Figure 16: Recorded total Civilian deaths in 2010 by parties to the conflict



Source: UNAMA, “2010 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” p. xi. http://unama.unmissions.orgPortals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012

As seen in Figure 17, IED attacks account for the majority of civilians killed in 2010 with 904 killed and 1662 injured. Civilian casualties from IEDs increased by 40 percent compared to 2009.⁷¹ “2010 was also characterized by an intensified, systematic, and widespread campaign of intimidation by insurgents.”⁷² According to the UN’s 2010 “Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” UNAMA recorded 381 assassinations and executions in 2010.⁷³ This is more than double the incidents

⁷⁰ Ibid., 8.

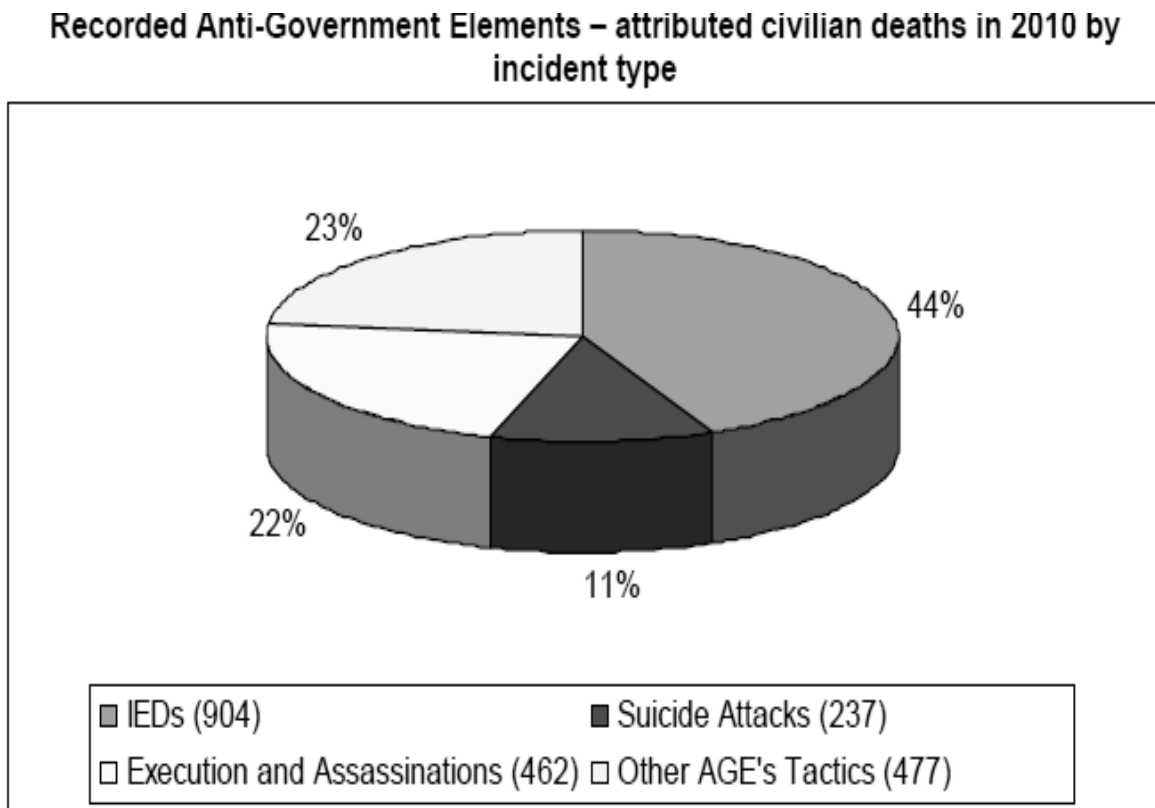
⁷¹ Ibid., 8.

⁷² Ibid., 8.

⁷³ Ibid., 8

recorded in 2009.⁷⁴

Figure 17: Record AGEs-attributed civilian deaths in 2010 by incident type



Source: UNAMA, “2010 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” p. 2
http://unama.missions.org.Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012.pdf

Surprisingly, the number of civilians killed by suicide attacks decreased by 15 percent compared to 2009.⁷⁵ “This may have reflected guidance in the Taliban’s Code of Conduct or *Laiha* to concentrate the use of these strategic weapons on very important targets” and possibly the guidance to “avoid casualties among the common people.”⁷⁶ At least 71 suicide attacks were carried out in 2010, killing 237 civilians and injuring 737.⁷⁷

The majority of these attacks occurred in Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

Even though the Taliban and other insurgent groups were responsible for a

⁷⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁶ ICRC, “Conflict in Afghanistan,” <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resource> [accessed March 18-March 2011], 81.

⁷⁷ UNAMA, “2010 Annual Report on Protection,” 11.

majority of the Afghan civilians injured or killed in 2010, some of these casualties can be attributed to Pro-Government Forces (PGF), which include U.S., ISAF, and ANSF forces. Between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010, more than 840 civilians were injured or killed by Pro-Government Forces with 440 civilian deaths and 400 injuries.⁷⁸ “This represents a decrease of 21 percent from the 1,057 civilian casualties linked to PGFs in 2009.”⁷⁹ UNAMA also recorded a significant decline in civilian deaths from air strikes (171), escalation of force incidents (45) and search and seizure operations (80) during 2010.⁸⁰

According to a number of statements released by U.S. and ISAF forces, “more aerial attacks, more operations by SOF forces, and more night raids were carried out in 2010 than in any previous year.”⁸¹ In spite of this increase, “UNAMA observed a significant decline in the number of civilians killed and injured by U.S., ISAF, and ANSF forces as General Petraeus, who took over command of ISAF in July 2010, reinforced and revised General McChrystal’s COIN guidelines.”⁸² Although the number of civilian casualties decreased by 43% in 2010, air strikes remained the deadliest tactic used by U.S. and ISAF forces that year.⁸³ Compared to 2009, “these attacks continued to cause the most civilian harm with 171 deaths and 133 injuries.”⁸⁴

In the second half of 2010, the number of air strikes increased substantially.⁸⁵

According to USAFCENT Public Affairs Directorate, “as of December 31, 2010, a total

⁷⁸ UNAMA, “2010 Annual Report on Protection,” 23.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸¹ Bill Roggio, “Special Operations Forces Deal Blows to Taliban Ranks,” 1.

⁸² UNAMA, “2010 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012 [accessed March 18 – March 2011], 25.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

of 33,679 Close Air Support sorties were recorded with a total of 5,101 incidents in which weapons were released.”⁸⁶ Although the number of air strikes increased dramatically, the number of civilian casualties from these attacks decreased in 2010.⁸⁷ “February and October proved to be the deadliest months for civilians killed by ISAF airstrikes in 2010.”⁸⁸

The number of civilian casualties caused by “night raids” also decreased in 2010. “UNAMA documented 60 incidents of night raids that caused civilian casualties.”⁸⁹ Both General McChrystal and General Petraeus increased the number of night raids carried out by U.S. SOF forces in 2010. These raids are “carried out without warning on private residences and are deeply resented by Afghans, who see troops entering their homes at night as a blatant violation of their country’s conservative social norms.”⁹⁰ Moreover, President Karzai began calling for an end to the U.S. night raids in 2010.⁹¹ “U.S. military officials however, deemed the tactic extremely effective in gathering intelligence, arresting suspected insurgents, reducing civilian casualties, and stopping more attacks by insurgent forces.”⁹² U.S. and NATO commanders also stated that no shots are fired in 80 percent of night raids.⁹³

Afghan Civilian Casualties in 2011

Despite a renewed emphasis by Coalition and Afghan forces to protect the

⁸⁶ Marc V. Schanz, “Boom Time in Afghanistan,” [http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Documents/2011/June %202011/0611afghanistan.pdf](http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Documents/2011/June%202011/0611afghanistan.pdf) [accessed March 18-June 2011] 28.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸⁸ UNAMA, “2010 Annual Report on Protection,” 23.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, “Afghanistan at the End of 2011,” [http://csis.org/files/publication/120103 _Afghan_War_at_End.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/120103_Afghan_War_at_End.pdf) [accessed March 18-January 3, 2012], 9.

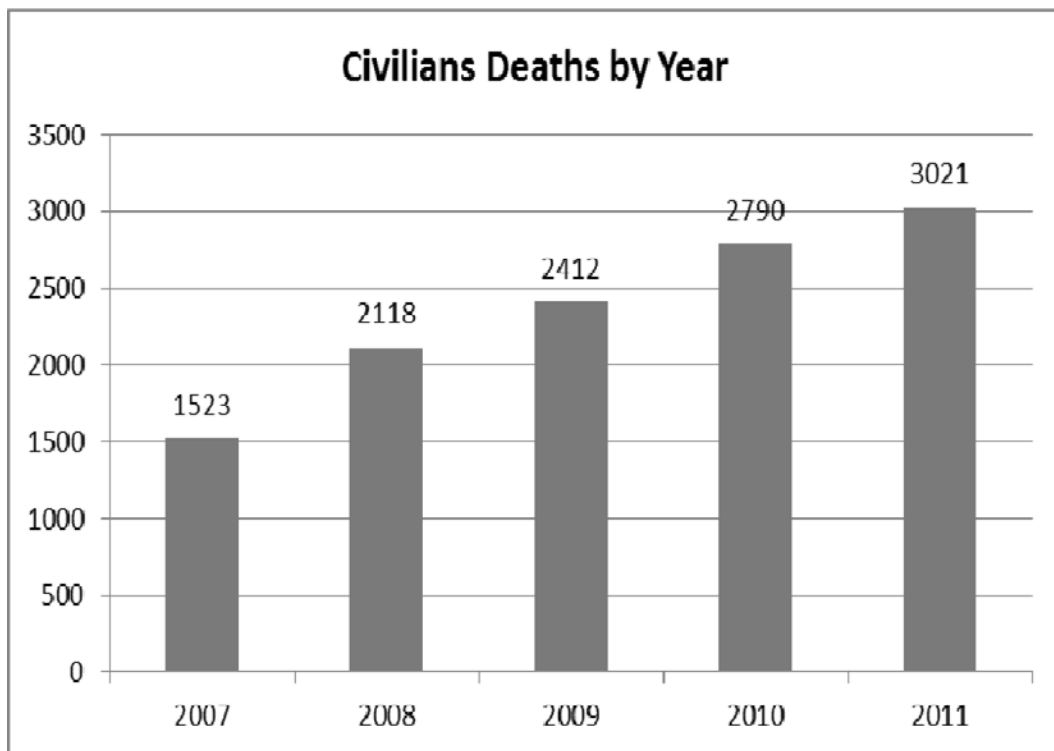
⁹¹ Alex Rodriguez & Hashmat Baktash, “Afghanistan, U.S. Sign Night Raid Authorization Pact,” *The Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 2012.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹³ Open Society Foundations, “The Cost of Kill/Capture: Impact of the Night Raid Surge on Afghan Civilians,” <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/Night-Raids-Report-FINAL-092011.pdf> [accessed March 18-September 19, 2011], 21.

population and winning over their support, “Afghanistan again incurred a greater human cost in 2011 than in previous years.”⁹⁴ UNAMA documented 3,021 civilian deaths in 2011, “an increase of eight percent over 2010 (2,790 civilian deaths) and a 25 percent increase from 2009.”⁹⁵ Since 2007, the number of Afghans killed has almost doubled from 1,523 (2007) to 3,021 (2011).⁹⁶ Insurgents caused 2,322-related deaths of Afghan civilians in 2011, up 14 percent from 2010.⁹⁷ More than 410 civilians were killed from operations by U.S., ISAF, and ANSF forces, down four percent from 2010.⁹⁸

Figure 18: Civilian Deaths by Year (2007-2011)



Source: “2011 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” p.1, http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012.pdf

At the same time, “the geographic distribution of civilian casualties shifted

⁹⁴ UNAMA. “2011 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012.pdf [accessed March 18 – February 2012], 1.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 2.

significantly, particularly in the second half of 2011.”⁹⁹ As the intensity of the conflict declined in southern Afghanistan, it began to intensify in areas previously unaffected by the insurgency, including the eastern and northern parts of Afghanistan.¹⁰⁰ During the second half of 2011, “only 289 civilians were killed as a result of engagements between insurgent and Coalition forces in southern Afghanistan.”¹⁰¹ This is a decline of 33 percent compared to the same period in 2010.¹⁰² “Deaths from this tactic decreased in all regions except, the eastern region, where 72 civilians died in ground combat, up 29 percent from 2010.”¹⁰³

As mentioned earlier, insurgents were responsible for 77 percent of all conflict-related civilian deaths in 2011.¹⁰⁴ “The use of IEDs by insurgent groups was the single largest killer of Afghan men, women, and children in 2011, taking the lives of 967 civilians or nearly one in three (32 percent) of all civilians killed in the conflict.”¹⁰⁵ During 2011, insurgents increased their use of anti-personnel landmines and IEDs even though they banned them in 1998 denouncing such weapons as “un-Islamic and anti-human.”¹⁰⁶

Unlike 2010, the number of civilians killed by suicide attacks rose dramatically in 2011.¹⁰⁷ In total, “431 Afghan civilians were killed in suicide attacks, an increase of 80 percent over 2010.”¹⁰⁸ According to UNAMA, suicide attacks accounted for 14 percent of all civilian deaths in 2010. The number of suicide attacks carried out by insurgents

⁹⁹ Ibid., 2

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰² Ibid., 3.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁴ UNAMA, “2011 Annual Report on Protection,” 1

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1.

increased as well.¹⁰⁹ In 2011, there were more than 431 suicide attacks across Afghanistan, compared to 238 in 2010.¹¹⁰ Targeted killings of civilians by insurgents increased as well. UNAMA documented 495 targeted killings across the country, up three percent from 2010.¹¹¹

Despite an increase in the number of civilians killed by the Taliban and other affiliated groups, there was a 4 percent decrease in the number of civilians killed by Coalition and ANSF forces.¹¹² In 2011, more than 410 Afghan men, women, and children were killed as a result of operations conducted by Pro-Government Forces.¹¹³ The number of civilians injured also decreased by more than 16% in 2011 compared to 2010. Similar to 2009 and 2010, airstrikes by U.S. and ISAF warplanes accounted for the majority of civilian deaths by U.S, NATO, and ANSF forces.¹¹⁴

According to UNAMA, more than 187 civilians were killed in airstrikes by Coalition forces in 2011.¹¹⁵ This is a nine percent increase compared to 2010.¹¹⁶ Interestingly enough, “less aerial operations were carried out by ISAF/Operation Enduring Freedom using fixed or rotary-wing aircraft (from 1,816 in 2010 to 1,675 in 2011).”¹¹⁷ Unlike previous years, “the eastern region of Afghanistan saw the majority of civilian deaths from aerial attacks in 2011.”¹¹⁸ Kunar province, in particular, experienced a third of all civilian deaths by Coalition aircraft that year.

The United States and ISAF also took additional steps in 2011 to help minimize

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹¹² Ibid., 24.

¹¹³ Ibid., 24.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 24.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 24.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 24.

¹¹⁷ Marc V. Schanz, “Boom Time in Afghanistan,” 128.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

the impact of night operations on civilians. In December of that year, General John Allen, the new commander of ISAF,

“issued a directive that encouraged ANSF to take the lead on operations, required that the provincial governor or his designated representative be notified prior to the commencement of an operation, provide written notification of any individuals detained within 24 hours where possible and that entry is initiated by ‘soft-knock’ with an Afghan led call-out in local language.”¹¹⁹

Despite these new ROEs, “UNAMA continued to receive reports that the standard of partnered operations was not often followed in night search operations.”¹²⁰

Another concerning finding reported in the UN’s “2011 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict”, was the number of civilians killed by operations and actions of the Afghan National Security Forces.¹²¹ Between July and December 2011, 41 civilians were killed as a result of operations carried out by the ANSF.¹²² This represented “a 192 percent increase in the number of civilian deaths attributed to these forces compared to the last six months of 2010.”¹²³ UNAMA recorded minimal increases or decreases in civilian casualties caused directly by ANSF forces in transitioned areas.¹²⁴

Afghan Civilian Casualties in 2012

Despite the positive security gains made in southern Afghanistan in 2011, Afghan civilians continued to be killed and wounded at an alarming rate in 2012. UNAMA documented 7,559 civilian casualties (2,754 civilian deaths and 4,805 injuries from

¹¹⁹ Azmat Khan, “Night Raids , Disrupting or Fueling the Insurgency,” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/afghanistan-pakistan/kill-capture/night-raids-disrupting-or-fueli/> [accessed March 18-June 17, 2011], 1.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹²¹ UNAMA. “2011 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012.pdf [accessed March 18 – February 2012], 28.

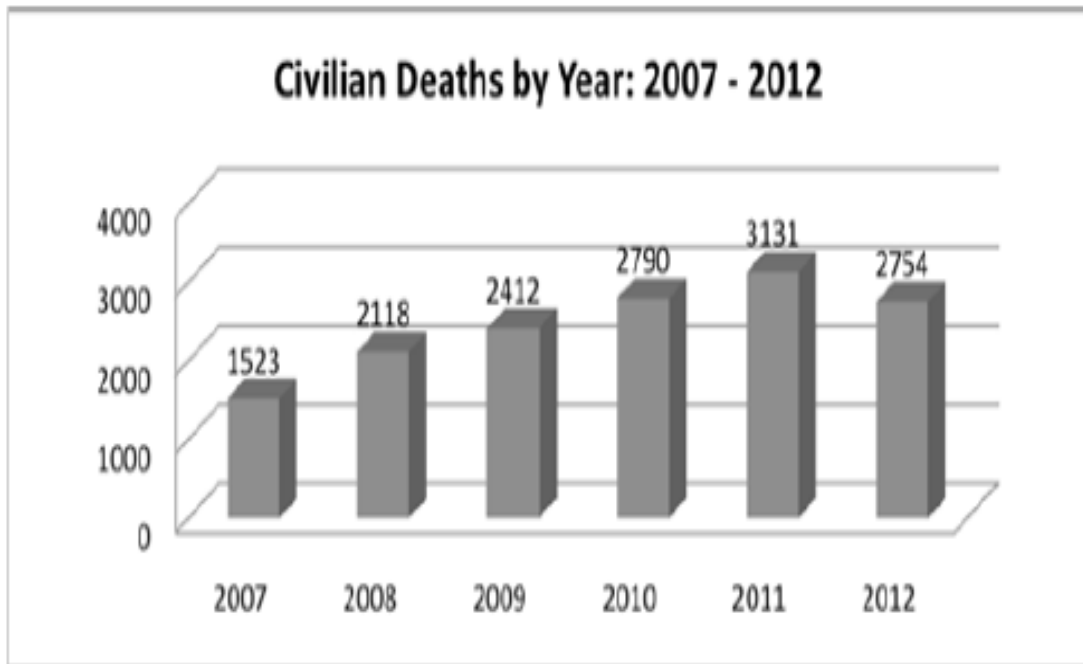
¹²² Ibid., 28.

¹²³ Ibid., 28.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 29.

armed conflict in 2012.¹²⁵ “These numbers reflect a 12 percent reduction in civilian deaths and a minimal increase in civilians injured compared to 2011.”¹²⁶ Despite this decrease, the Taliban and other insurgent groups continued to target civilians throughout the country.

Figure 19: Civilian Deaths by Year: 2007-2012



Source: UNAMA, “2012 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” p.1, <http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=K0B5RL2XYcU%3D>

According to the UN’s report, 81 percent of all civilian casualties in 2012 can be attributed to the Taliban and other insurgent groups.¹²⁷ “The heavy use of IEDs by insurgents remained the biggest threat to civilians in 2012, causing 2,531 civilian casualties with 868 civilians killed and 1,663 injured, in 782 separate incidents.”¹²⁸ This represented a three percent increase from 2011. Moreover, IED incidents accounted for

¹²⁵ Ibid., 1

¹²⁶ UNAMA. “2012 Annual Report on Protection Civilians in Armed Conflict,” http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/Feb_8_2014_PoC-report_2013-Full-report-ENG.pdf [accessed March 18-February 2013], 1.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 3.

38 percent of all civilian casualties in 2012.¹²⁹

UNAMA also recorded a 108 percent increase in the number of Afghan civilians injured or killed as a result of targeted killings.¹³⁰ Between January 1, and December 31, 2012, more than 1,077 Afghan civilians were injured or killed.¹³¹ “Many of these casualties resulted from the intentional targeting of civilians perceived to be supporting the Afghan Government, including government officials, off-duty police officers, tribal elders, and persons supporting the peace process.”¹³² Of these 1,077 civilian casualties, “targeted killings and injuries of government civilian employees increased by a staggering 700 percent.”¹³³

Civilian deaths and injuries caused by Coalition and ANSF forces continued to decline in 2012, just like they had in the previous two years.¹³⁴ Between January 1 and December 31, 2012, “UNAMA recorded 587 civilian casualties (316 deaths and 271 injuries) attributed to PGFs.”¹³⁵ This represented a “39 percent decrease in civilian deaths and 53 percent reduction in civilians injured, and an overall 46 percent decrease in total civilian casualties from 2011.”¹³⁶ Eight percent of all civilian casualties in 2012 were attributed to U.S., NATO, and ANSF forces, compared to 14 percent in 2011.¹³⁷

Despite a decline in the number of civilians killed in aerial operations, airstrikes continued to be main cause of civilian deaths by ISAF and Afghan forces.¹³⁸ According to UNAMA, “more than 204 civilians were killed or injured as a result of U.S. and ISAF

¹²⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹³¹ Ibid., 4.

¹³² Ibid., 4.

¹³³ Ibid., 4.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 4.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 2.

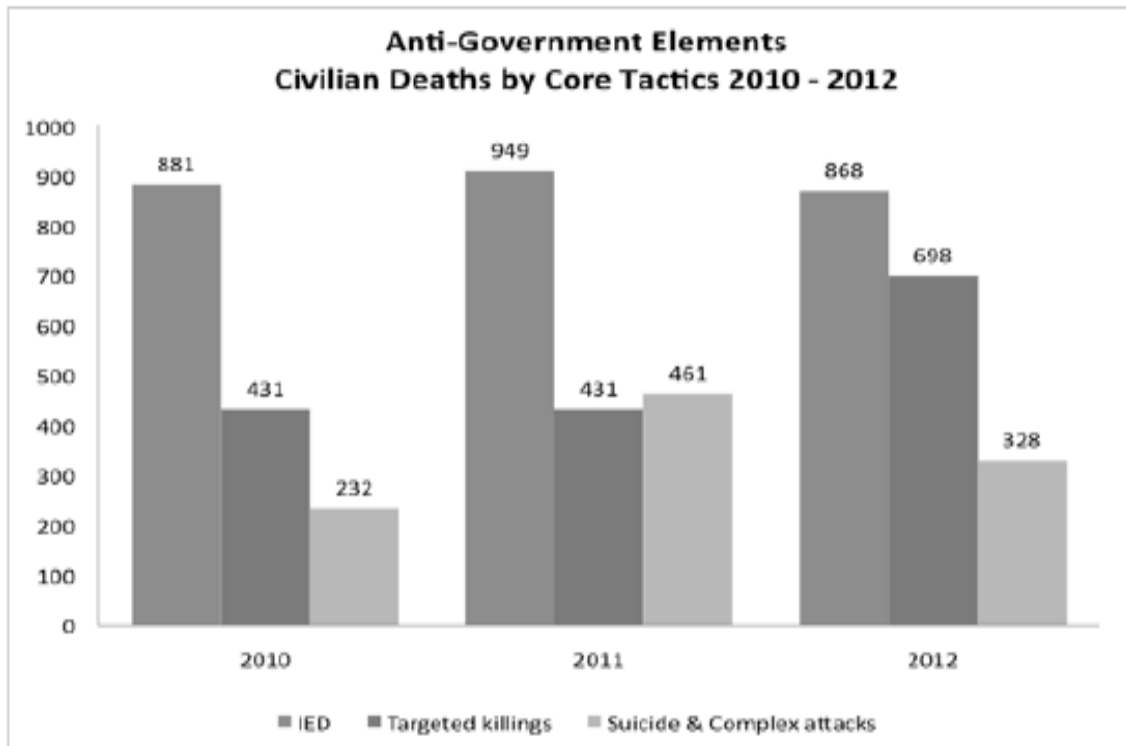
¹³⁷ Ibid., 2.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 2.

airstrikes (126 deaths and 78 injuries).”¹³⁹ This is a 42 percent decrease from 2011.

“Airstrikes caused 40 percent of all civilian deaths attributed to Coalition and ANSF forces and three percent of all civilian casualties from all parties.”¹⁴⁰ Of the 126 civilian deaths caused by aerial attacks, 40 percent were children.¹⁴¹

Figure 20: AGE Civilian Deaths by Core Tactics (2010-2012)



Source: UNAMA, “2012 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” p.29, <http://unama.missions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=K0B5RL2XYcU%3D>

The number of civilians killed as result of night raids conducted by U.S, ISAF, and Afghan SOF teams also decreased in 2012. According to UNAMA, “only 54 civilians were killed while 21 were injured during these operations, a decrease of 33 percent compared with 2011.”¹⁴² This is consistent with the downward trend documented in the same periods in 2010 and 2011. UNAMA was also able to document 35 search

¹³⁹ Ibid., 2.

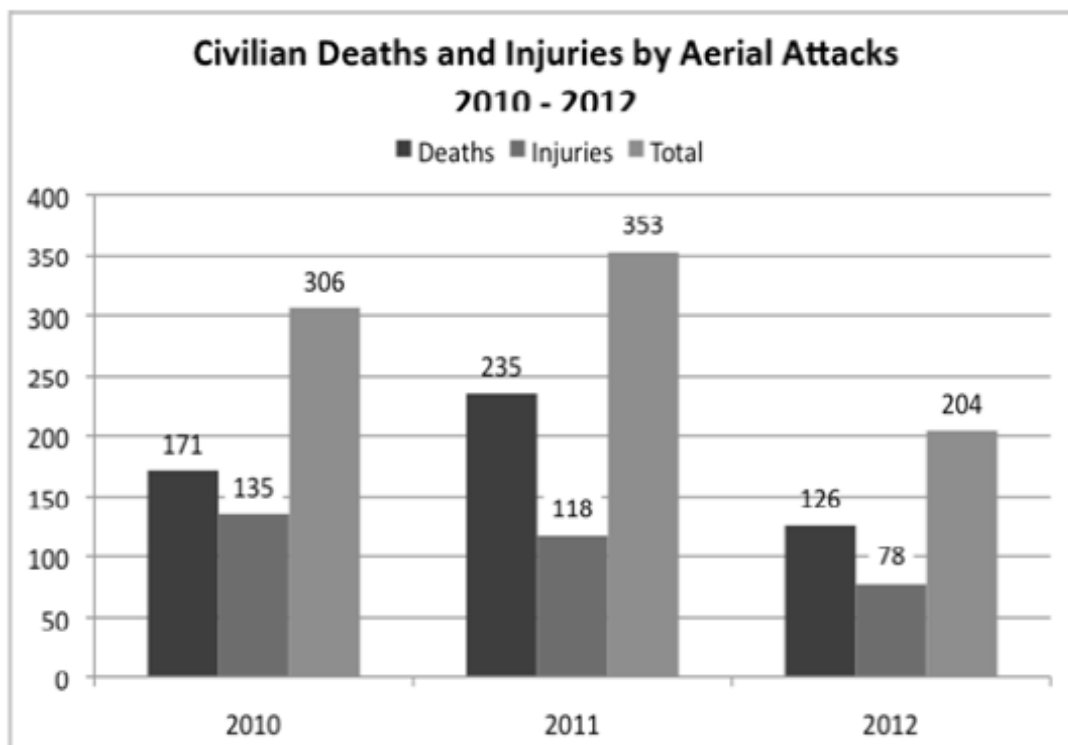
¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴² Ibid., 35.

operations by PGF forces which resulted in civilian casualties, a 78 percent drop in the number of incidents of search operations resulting in civilian casualties compared to 2011.¹⁴³ Despite this decrease, “it remains unclear whether the decline in civilian casualties can be attributed to the better practices and training of Afghan security forces or a reduction in the number of search operations being carried out.”¹⁴⁴ In July 2012, Afghan security forces began taking the lead in the majority of military operations, although U.S. and ISAF forces may have been present during these operations.¹⁴⁵ The majority occurred during ground operations against insurgents, “usually following an attack against an ANSF checkpoint or convoy.”¹⁴⁶

Figure 21: Civilian Deaths and Injuries by Aerial Attacks (2010-2012)



Source: UNAMA, “2012 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” p.32, <http://unamumissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=K0B5RL2XYcU%3D>

¹⁴³ Ibid., 35.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 35.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 37.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 37.

Enemy Initiated Attacks

Since 2009, “ISAF reporting – and a great deal of U.S. reporting as well – focused on one set of criteria: enemy initiated attacks (EIAs).”¹⁴⁷ The U.S. and ISAF define EIAs as “enemy-initiated direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire, as well as executed attacks.”¹⁴⁸ At first, EIAs were “believed to be a useful surrogate metric for determining which side possesses the tactical initiative as well as a key indicator of which side controls initiation of firefights and has better situational awareness and access to intelligence on enemy movements.”¹⁴⁹ However, the reporting of this metric was ceased on March 5, 2013 after it became clear there was no progress made by Coalition forces between 2011 and 2012.¹⁵⁰

ISAF and DoD reporting do indicate that the number of enemy initiated attacks did drop between 2011 and 2012 “but these reports also indicate EIAs did not drop meaningfully in 2012 and remain far higher than in 2009.”¹⁵¹ This reporting also shows that the number of EIAs in Kandahar and Helmand provinces (the main focus of the surge) continued to remain high in 2012.¹⁵² A breakout of the trend in enemy initiated attacks by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is shown in Figure 22. It not only “shows no significant progress when 2010 is compared to 2011 and 2012, but it also shows that insurgents kept up the pace of their attacks by shifting away from ISAF targets and focusing on ANSF and civilian targets.”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Anthony H. Cordesman, “The War in Afghanistan at the End of 2012: The Uncertain Course of the War and Transition,” <https://csis.org/publication/war-afghanistan-end-2012-uncertain-course-war-and-transition> [accessed March 21 – January 22, 2013], 17.

¹⁴⁸ ISAF, “ISAF Month Data Trends through December 2012,” 1.

¹⁴⁹ David Kilcullen, “Measuring Progress in Afghanistan,” 11.

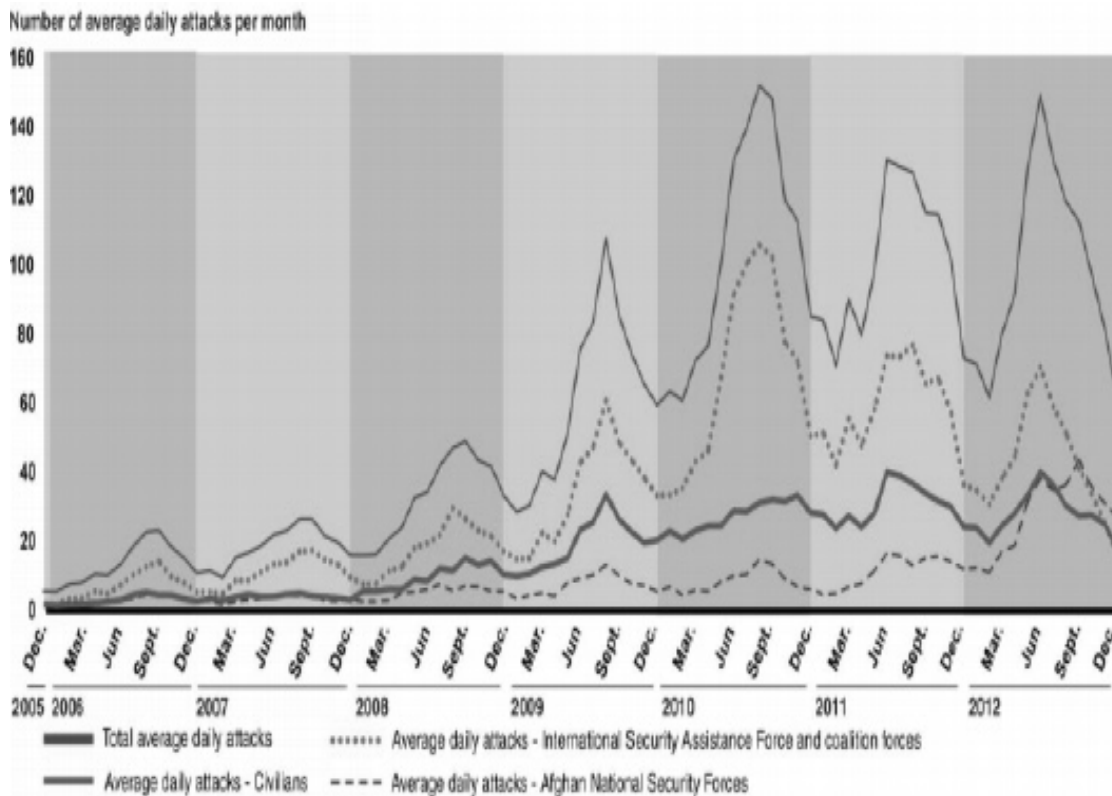
¹⁵⁰ Robert Burns, “Taliban Attacks Drop Reported By ISAF Was Incorrect,” 1.

¹⁵¹ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis: The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 3.

¹⁵² Anthony H. Cordesman, “The War in Afghanistan at the End of 2012,” 17.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 17.

Figure 22: Average Daily EIAs by Type in Afghanistan, Dec 2005-Dec 2012



Source: Afghanistan, Key Oversight Issues, Government account Office, February 2013, GAO-13-218SP, p.17.

Another report that indicates the number of EIAs did not drop meaningfully between 2010-2012 and remains far higher than levels in 2009 is ISAF's "Monthly Data Trends" report. This data comes from the Afghan Mission Network (AMN) Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) and defines EIAs as "enemy-initiated direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire, as well as executed attacks."¹⁵⁴ ISAF includes a bar chart of EIAs in its monthly reporting on the violence in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁵ "Although the underlying data used to make the graphs is classified, it is possible, based on ISAF's reporting, to estimate the number of EIAs each month."¹⁵⁶

According to Figure 23, "the number of EIAs exceeded or approximated 1,000 in

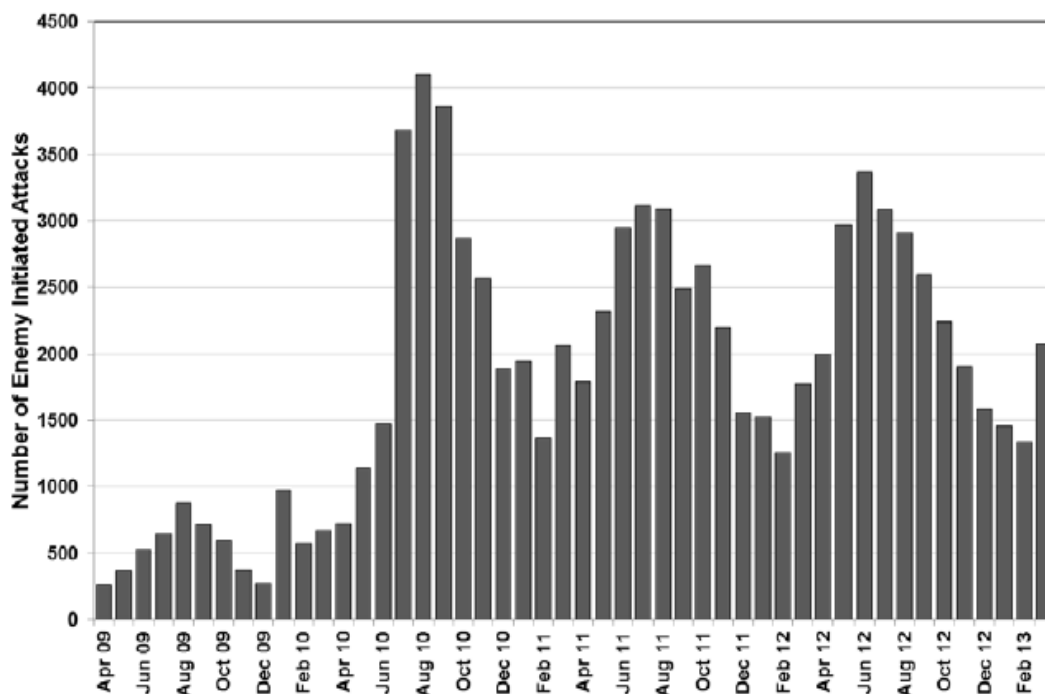
¹⁵⁴ ISAF, "ISAF Month Data Trends through December 2012," http://augengeradeaus.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ISAF_Monthly_Trends_Dec2012.pdf [accessed March 21-January 13, 2013], 3.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵⁶ Anthony H. Cordesman, "The War in Afghanistan at the End of 2012," 17.

just four months, and in no month did that figure reach 1,500 in 2008.”¹⁵⁷ Violence continued to rise in 2009 as the number of EIAs “exceeded 1,000 in eight months out of the year, 1,500 in five months, and topped 2,500 in one month (August 2009).”¹⁵⁸ By 2010, when the surge was first implemented, the number of EIAs exceeded 1,000 in every month. “In ten of twelve months, the number of EIAs exceeded 1,500. (Recall that in 2008 the number of EIAs did not reach 1,500 in any single month).”¹⁵⁹ Moreover, the “number of EIAs was greater than 2,500 in six months out of the year.”¹⁶⁰ The number of enemy initiated attacks also topped 4,000 for the first time in both August and September of that year. While the level of violence “continued to remain high in 2011, the number of EIAs began to decline in May of that year.”¹⁶¹

Figure 23: Enemy-Initiated Attacks (EIA) Nationwide Monthly Attacks



Source: Department of Defense, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, p. p. A-1, A-3.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis: The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 3.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

After five consecutive years where enemy initiated-attacks and overall violence increased sharply each year (e.g., up 94 percent in 2010 over 2009), “such attacks began to decrease in May 2011 compared to the previous year and continued to decline for the rest of 2011.”¹⁶² In comparison, the number of EIAs only exceeded 3,000 in three months in 2011 (June, July, & August) compared to six months in 2010.¹⁶³ The lowest number of EIAs reported in 2011 was in February (under 1,500).¹⁶⁴ This month represented “the first time the number of EIAs had not topped 1,500 since February 2010.”¹⁶⁵

Even though the number of enemy initiated attacks did drop in 2011 and 2012, “these numbers are far closer to 2010 in terms of the total level of violence than 2008 or 2009.”¹⁶⁶ When compared to monthly totals from 2009, the total number of EIAs in 2011 and 2012 has been far greater each month.¹⁶⁷ While the total number of EIAs exceeded 2,500 in only one month in 2009, “it topped this same mark on five occasions in 2011, and five months in 2012.”¹⁶⁸

Despite progress made by U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, the number of EIAs did not decline as significantly in 2012 as they had in 2011.¹⁶⁹ In January 2013, the U.S. and ISAF discovered that a number of EIAs reported from independent ANSF operations had not been included in its database.¹⁷⁰ These EIAs occurred throughout 2012, although most occurred towards the end of the year. The ANSF had accurately

¹⁶² Anthony H. Cordesman, “Failing Transition: The New 1230 Report on Progress Toward Stability and Progress in Afghanistan,” http://csis.org/files/publication/130805_failingtransition_afghanistan.pdf [accessed March 21-August 5, 2013], 8.

¹⁶³ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis: The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 4..

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 5.

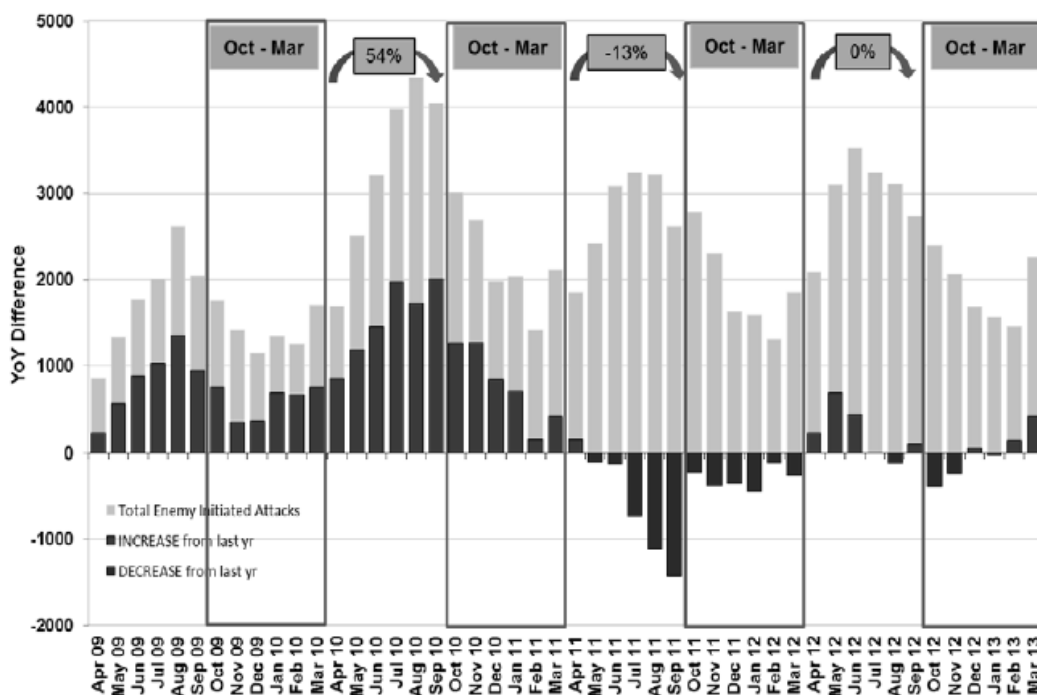
¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 5.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷⁰ Robert Burns, “Taliban Attacks Drop Reported By ISAF Was Incorrect,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/26/taliban-attacks-drop_n_2767922.html [accessed March 21-February 26, 2013] 1.

reported this data, but ISAF mistakenly did not enter the data into its main EIA database.¹⁷¹ According to Anthony H. Cordesman (2013), “an internal audit resulted in a retroactive correction of 2012 EIA totals, from being down 7 percent compared to 2011 to no change.”¹⁷² The error revealed by the discovery in January has since then been corrected (Figure 24), and all EIA-related data in this report uses this corrected data.

Figure 24: Number of Enemy Initiated Attacks Has Recovered Since the “Surge”: No Progress in reducing EIAs in the First Six Months of 2013 versus First Six Months of 2012



Source: Department of Defense, Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, p. A-1.

In contrast, Figures 25 through 27 show that “even if one does confine EIA reporting to combat areas and tie it to specific regions,”¹⁷³ the figures do not show any “significant” progress made by U.S. and ISAF forces in Helmand and Kandahar provinces in 2011 and 2012. This is particularly important because plans to carry out a

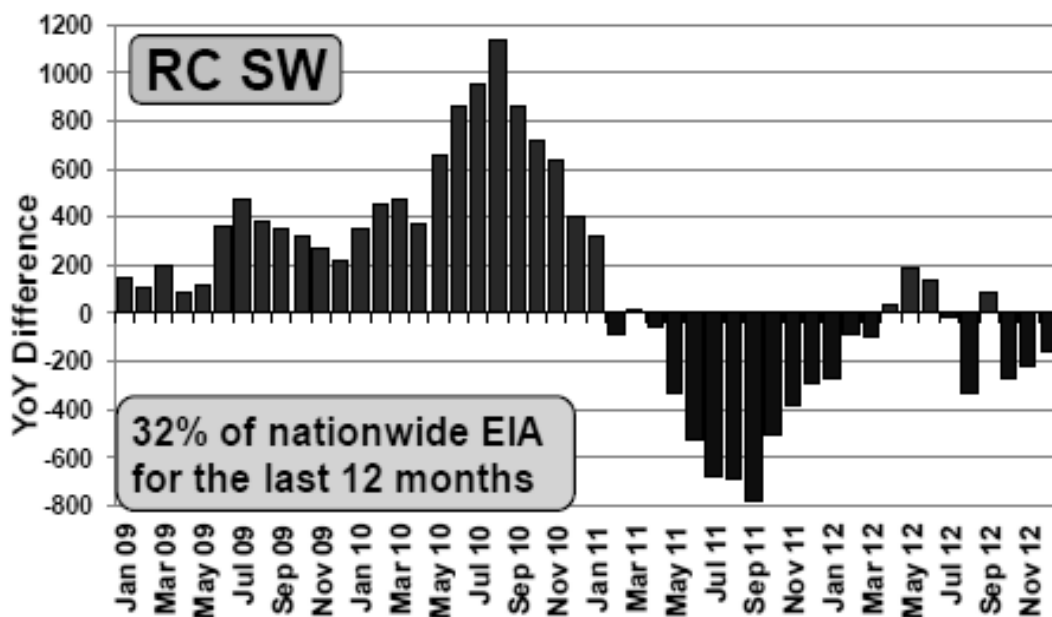
¹⁷¹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷² Ibid., 8.

¹⁷³ Anthony H. Cordesman, “The Afghan War in 2013,” http://csis.org/files/publication/130327_afghan_war_in_2013_vol_III.pdf [accessed March 22-May 2013]. 12.

similar campaign in the east were canceled due to U.S. and NATO troop cuts. Thus, there was no broad effort to take back control of key areas in eastern Afghanistan.¹⁷⁴ Figure 25 shows “what appear to be positive trends in enemy initiated attacks in the Helmand area – which was the key focus of the surge: however, these trends do little more than show that the insurgents stopped making attacks they know would result in major losses during the peak of the surge in 2010.”¹⁷⁵ As seen in Figure 25, this “positive” trend largely vanishes in 2011.¹⁷⁶

Figure 25: EIA Monthly Year-Over-Year Changes in RC SW (Jan 09-Dec 12)



Source: Afghan Mission Network (AMN) Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) Database as of January 12, 2013, p.4. http://augengeradeaus.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ISAF_Monthly_Trends_Dec_2012.Pdf

Another area that was a key focus of U.S. and ISAF counterinsurgency efforts was Kandahar province. Kandahar falls under the command of RC South (RC-S) which includes the provinces of Uruzgan, Zabul, and Daykundi as well. Even though progress was made in reversing the Taliban’s momentum in Kandahar, this area saw far fewer

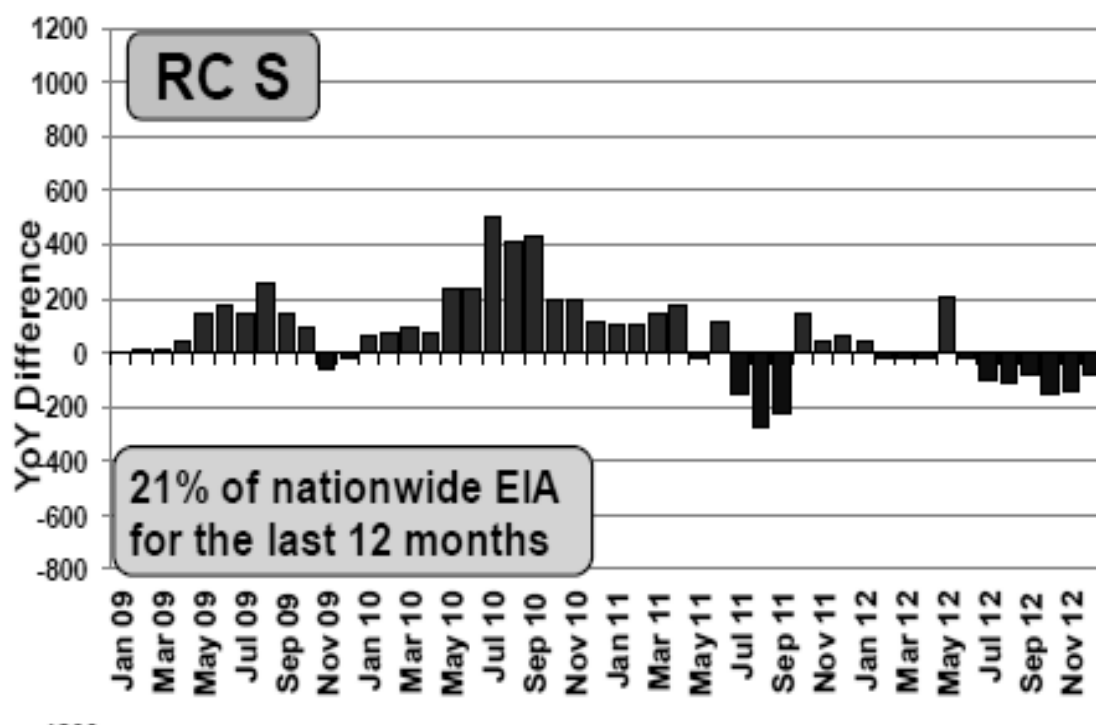
¹⁷⁴Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis: The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 2.

¹⁷⁵Anthony H. Cordesman, “The Afghan War in 2013,” 12.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 13.

positive trends in EIAs during the 2010-2011 campaign than RC SW. Upon review, the number of EIAs surged in Kandahar and the rest of RC South during the summer of 2010. While some progress was made in 2011, violence in Kandahar continued to remain well above levels before the surge in 2010. Moreover, the number of enemy initiated attacks increased once again during the spring and summer of 2012 and has declined very little since then.

Figure 26: EIA Monthly Year-Over-Year Changes in RC S (Jan 09-Dec 12)

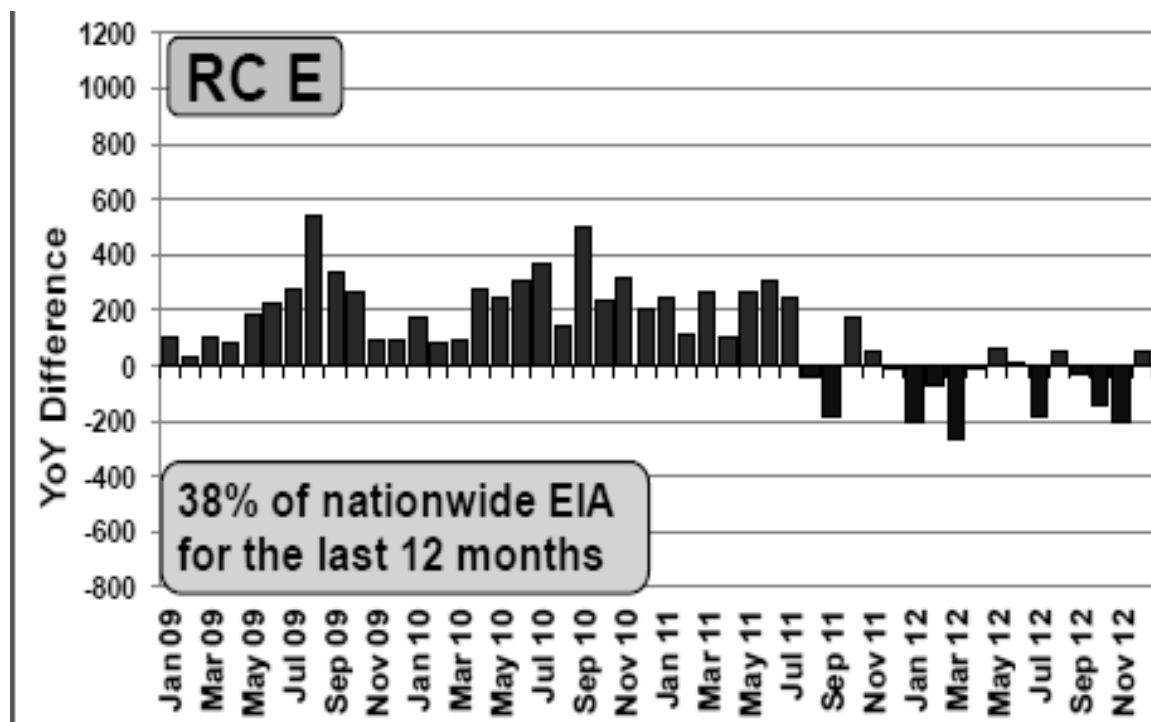


Source: Afghan Mission Network (AMN) Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) Database as of January 12, 2013, p.4. http://augengeradeaus.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ISAF_Monthly_Trends_Dec2012.pdf

A final area that was the focus of intensive U.S. and ISAF military operations is RC East. RC East includes the provinces of Bamyan, Ghazni, Kapisa, Khost, Kunar, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktika, Paktiya, Panjshayr, Parwan and Wardak. It covers 46,000 square miles and shares a portion of its border with Pakistan. Moreover, this area serves as the home turf of the Haqqani Network. As seen in Figure

27, RC E accounted for 38% of all EIAs reported in Afghanistan in 2012. This is a decrease of 8% compared to 2011, but unlike RC South and RC Southwest, RC East has seen very few positive trends, even less than RC South.¹⁷⁷ EIAs increased for 29 consecutive months between January 2009 and May 2011, before there was any decline. Even then, this decline was insignificant as the number of attacks has increased since May 2011 and remains at levels well above EIA levels before the surge in 2010.

Figure 27: EIA Monthly Year-Over-Year Changes in RC E (Jan 09-Dec 12)



Source: Afghan Mission Network (AMN) Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) Database as of January 12, 2013, p.4. http://augengeradeaus.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ISAF_Monthly_Trends_Dec2012.pdf

Unfortunately, there is no way of telling if the U.S.'s counterinsurgency strategy would have been successful in quelling the insurgency plaguing eastern Afghanistan as the United States began withdrawing troops before they could be dispatched to this region. On June 22, 2011, President Obama announced that all of the 33,000 additional

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

troops sent to Afghanistan would be withdrawn by September 2012. Defense Secretary Gates and General Petraeus had initially pushed for a drawdown of 3,000-5,000 so that U.S. forces could dispatch a small number of troops to the eastern provinces of Paktika, Paktia, and Khost to conduct counterterrorism operations against Haqqani Network fighters, leaders, and infrastructure.¹⁷⁸ This, in turn, “would have halted the Haqqani Network’s momentum and prevent them from spreading into adjacent provinces and, most importantly, to the national capital of Kabul.”¹⁷⁹ Despite these recommendations, Obama ultimately decided to adopt a more aggressive withdrawal plan citing that the current military campaign was “meeting our goals” in Afghanistan and the drawdown would begin “from a position of strength.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ CJ Radin, “Analysis: U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan shifts as forces draw down,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/the_military_strateg_1.php [accessed January 17 – August 3, 2011], 2.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁸⁰ Dave Boyer, “Obama Time to Withdraw Troops from Afghanistan: We stand not for Empire,” *The Washington Times*, June 24th, 2011.

CHAPTER VI: EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A MORE CAPABLE & ACCOUNTABLE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT

“A government that is losing to a counterinsurgency isn’t being outfought, it is being out-governed.”

-David Kilcullen

One of the biggest challenges to U.S. success in Afghanistan over the last decade has been wide-spread corruption and a lack of governance by the Afghan Government. According to *FM 3-24*, “good governance is normally a key requirement to achieve legitimacy for the Host Nation (HN) government.”¹ *FM 3-24* defines governance “as the Host Nation government’s ability to gather and distribute resources while providing direction and control for the society.”² These include the regulation of public activity, taxation, maintenance of security, control and essential services, and normalizing the means of succession of power.³ Governments “that attain these goals usually garner the support of enough of the population to create stability.”⁴

Since 2002, Afghanistan has consistently ranked as one of the world’s most corrupt nations, along with Syria, Somalia, and North Korea.⁵ In 2009, Afghanistan ranked 179 out of 180 countries in Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, making it-by that standard-the second most corrupt country in the world. An ABC

¹U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, (Washington: Department of Defense, 2006), 5-44.

² *Ibid.*, 5-44.

³ *Ibid.*, 5-44.

⁴ Elliot Cohen, Jan Horvath, and John Nagl, “Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency,” <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/milreview/cohen.pdf> [accessed March 16-March 2006], 49.

⁵ Brian Patrick Eha, “The 10 Most Corrupt and Least Corrupt Countries in the World,” <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/230189> [accessed April 1-December 3, 2013], 1.

poll in the winter of 2009-210 found that 95 percent of Afghans calls corruption a problem, and 76 percent called it a “big problem.”¹ This is 31 percent points higher than in 2007.² Integrity Watch Afghanistan released a survey in June 2010 that found “Afghans considered corruption to be the third largest problem in the country, following security and unemployment.”³

The Afghan people “are likewise not enthralled by an overly centralized and controlling government in Kabul. They prefer local governance and local security with some enablers and resources from the central government.”⁴ The Afghans also want fundamental services such as education and roads. According to LTC Chris Cavoli, “the Taliban seek ways to prevent the Afghan government from taking actions that would legitimate itself by providing reconstruction and security, making possible economic activity other than narcotics cultivation and trafficking.”⁵ Thus, Afghans “who have minimal positive ties with their national government, have minimal incentive to support it.”⁶ Even though many Afghans are dissatisfied with aid ineffectiveness, corruption, and government failure to protect the population, support for the Taliban remains low.

According to David Kilcullen, “Afghans hate the Taliban; even today only four percent want them back.”⁷ Moreover, 63 percent of Afghans surveyed in 2008 wanted Coalition troops to stay, while 82 percent wanted the current government to continue

¹ Anthony H. Cordesman, “How America Corrupted Afghanistan: Time to Look in the Mirror,” http://csis.org/publication/100907_American_Corruption_Afghanistan.pdf [accessed April 1-Sep 9, 2010], 3.

² Ibid., 3.

³ IWA, “Afghan Perceptions and Experiences of Corruption, A National Survey 2010,” <http://www.iwaweb.org/corruptionSurvey2010/NationalCorruption2010.html> [accessed April 1-January 23, 2011], 1.

⁴ Robert Cassidy, *War, Will, and Warlords: Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 2001-2011*, (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2012), 113.

⁵ Chris Cavoli, manuscript entitled “Guns and Tea,” June 20, 2010, p.18

⁶ Tom Pike and Eddie J. Brown, “Populations as Complex Adaptive Systems: A Case Study of Corruption In Afghanistan, 4.

⁷ David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 67.

ruling Afghanistan. Forty-nine percent of these respondents also rated the central government's performance as good or excellent.⁸ Thus, Afghan support remained one of the United States' and ISAF's most important assets heading into 2010.⁹

Under the guidance of Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus, the Obama administration identified the need to “separate insurgent influence from the populace and support Afghan government sub-national structures to establish rule of law and deliver basic services”¹⁰ as one of the three principal efforts of the United States' counterinsurgency strategy. To gauge progress made in this aspect of the war, the Defense Department developed a series of metrics for estimating the level of Afghan government influence and control, and the impact of aid programs: (1) Corruption, the misuse of entrusted power for private gain; (2) Rule of Law, the lack of effective government; (3) Improving Afghan subnational governance, building governance from the bottom up; and (4) Revenue collection, the rate and success of taxation is a measure for government support.¹¹

Even though some of the “metrics used to gauge progress are inconsistent and fewer and fewer have been provided as U.S. and NATO forces continue their withdrawal from Afghanistan,”¹² these measures do provide insight into U.S. and ISAF efforts to improve Afghan governance and corruption between 2010 and 2012. Moreover, these measurements also give a way of determining whether or not the United States counterinsurgency strategy was successful in promoting a more capably and accountable

⁸ Ibid., 67.

⁹ Ibid., 68.

¹⁰ Department of Defense, “November 2010 Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” http://www.defense.gov/pubs/november_1230_report_Final.pdf [accessed April 1-November 2010], 11.

¹¹ Ibid., 11.

¹² Anthony H. Cordesman, “Afghanistan: The Failed Metrics of Ten Years of War,” http://csis.org/files/publication/120209_Afghanistan_Failed_Metrics.pdf [accessed April 1-February 9, 2012], 67.

Afghan government.

Corruption: More Dangerous than the Taliban?

One of the biggest threats to Afghanistan over the last decade has been corruption. According to Tom Pike and Eddie Brown, (2011), “Corruption permeates every facet of Afghan governance from high levels of grand corruption at the national government to petty corruption at the lower levels of government.”¹³ Corruption has become in effect, a “domestic issue on its own terms as well as a factor contributing to terrorism and insurgency.”¹⁴ Since 2001, “one of the unquestioned premises of American and NATO policy has been that ordinary Afghans do not view public corruption quite the same way that Americans and other Westerners do.”¹⁵ Diplomats, military officers, and senior officials flying in from Washington “often say privately that while public graft is pernicious, there is no point in trying to abolish it-and that trying to do so could destroy the very government the West has helped to build.”¹⁶

The spread of corruption in Afghanistan has also been facilitated by the sudden inflow of foreign aid over the past decade. “This had led to a nationwide crisis that has undercut both the capability and legitimacy of the Afghan government to implement any effective policy as well as the well-meaning actions of foreign supporters, including the U.S. and UN.”¹⁷ Although the pre-2001 Taliban proved corrupt in practice when they came to power, many Afghans have turned to the Taliban shadow government, because the current government has been unsuccessful at establishing a consistent and enforceable

¹³ Tom Pike and Eddie J. Brown, “Populations as Complex Adaptive Systems: A Case Study of Corruption In Afghanistan, 3.

¹⁴ David Isby, *Afghanistan: Graveyard of Empires*, (New York: Pegasus Books, 2010), 154.

¹⁵ Dexter Filkins, “Inside Corrupt-istan, a Loss of Faith in Leaders,” *New York Times*, September 4, 2010.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁷ Sarah Chayes, “The Money Pit,” <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story2014/02/afghanistan-the-money-pit-103880.html>. [accessed April 3-March/April 2014], 5.

rule of law.¹⁸

According to a report released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2010, “Afghan citizens had to pay approximately US\$ 2.5 billion in bribes which is equivalent to 23 percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP).”¹⁹ This is similar to the revenue accrued by the opium trade in 2009 (which UNODC estimates at US\$ 2.8 billion).²⁰ “Drugs and bribes are the two largest income generators in Afghanistan; together they correspond to about half the country’s licit GDP.”²¹

The report also showed that graft was a part of everyday in Afghanistan. During the survey period, one Afghan out of two had to pay at least one kickback to a public official.²² “In more than half the cases (56%), the request for illicit payment was an explicit demand by the service provider.”²³ In three quarters of the cases, baksheesh (bribes) were paid in cash.²⁴ The average bribe is US\$ 160, in a country where GDP per capita is a mere US\$ 425 per year.²⁵

Moreover, the survey also finds that those entrusted with upholding the law are seen as most guilty of violating it.²⁶ “Around 25 percent of Afghans had to pay at least one bribe to police and officials during the survey period.”²⁷ Between 10-20 percent had to pay bribes either to judges, prosecutors, or members of the government.²⁸ The international community does not escape criticism: 54 percent of Afghans believe that

¹⁸ David Isby, *Afghanistan: Graveyard of Empires*, 54.

¹⁹ UNODC, “Corruption in Afghanistan,” <http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Afghanistan-corruption-survey2010-Eng.pdf> [accessed April 3-Janaury 2010], 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²² *Ibid.*, 4.

²³ BBCNews.Com, “UN Afghanistan Survey Points to huge Scale of Bribery,” <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8466915.stm> [accessed April 3-January 19, 2010], 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁶ UNODC, “Corruption in Afghanistan,” 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

international organizations and NGOs "are corrupt and are in the country just to get rich".²⁹

Between 2010 and 2012, the U.S. and Afghan governments established a number of programs to combat graft in Afghanistan.³⁰ General H.R. McMaster, a key deputy of General Petraeus's, "formed several DoD task forces to focus on corruption (Shafafiyat, Task Force Spotlight, and Task Force 2010) from a U.S. military/counterinsurgency perspective."³¹ These task forces, in part, reviewed U.S. contracting strategies to enhance Afghan capacity and reduce the potential for corruption.³² The Shafafiyat task force announced in February 2012 that it had "caused the restitution of \$11.1 million, \$25.4 million in fines, and \$3.4 million in seizures from allegedly fraudulent contractors, and had debarred or suspended more than 125 American, Afghan and international workers for alleged fraud."³³

Senior U.S. officials also helped the Afghan government create a number of oversight bodies to curb corruption. Since 2008, several additional investigative bodies have been established under the Ministry of Interior.³⁴ "The most prominent is the Major Crimes Task Force, tasked with investigating public corruption, organized crime, and kidnapping."³⁵ A related body is the Sensitive Investigations Unit (SIU), "run by several dozen Afghan police officers, vetted and trained by the DEA."³⁶ This body was responsible for the August 2010 arrest of Mohammad Zia Salehi, a Karzai aide, on

²⁹ UNODC, "Corruption widespread in Afghanistan, UNODC survey says," 1.

³⁰ John Ryan, "Task Force Rooting Out Corruption in Afghanistan," *Army Times* February 20, 2012.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

³² Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance," <http://www.refworld.org/docid/50d1f21b2.html> [accessed April 3-November 30, 2012], 46.

³³ John Ryan, "Task Force Rooting Out Corruption in Afghanistan," 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁶ Joshua Partlow, "Afghanistan Investigating 5 Current and Former Cabinet Members," *Washington Post*, November 24, 2009.

charges of soliciting a bribe from the New Ansari Money Exchange in exchange for ending a money-laundering investigation of the firm.³⁷ The Afghan government also “finalized a National Corruption Strategy (Azimi Report) on December 21, 2010 and committed to enacting 37 laws to curb corruption.”³⁸ Despite the progress made by the United States and Afghan government in fighting corruption, Afghanistan continues to rank as one of the world’s most corrupt nations.³⁹

Figure 28: Afghanistan’s Rank in Transparency International’s Annual (CPI)

YEAR	RANK	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES SURVEYED
2013	175 (T)	177
2012	174 (T)	176
2011	180 (T)	182
2010	176 (T)	178
2009	179	180
2008	176	180
2007	172 (T)	180
2006	NO DATA	163
2005	117 (T)	159

(T): Indicates years of Afghanistan’s score tied with one or more other country.

According to Transparency International’s Annual Corruption Perception Index, Afghanistan has consistently ranked as one of the top five corrupt countries in the world since 2008. In 2008, Transparency International ranked Afghanistan 176th out of 180 countries, only fourth from the worst case. Since then its ratings have continued to slip.

³⁷ Ibid., 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 1.

³⁹ Paul D. Shinkman, “Corruption Plagues Afghanistan Ahead of U.S. Withdrawal,” <http://www.rawa.org/temp/runews/2013/12/27/corruption-plagues-afghanistan-ahead-of-u-s-withdrawal.html> [accessed April 4-December 27, 2013], 2.

Between 2010 and 2012, Afghanistan ranked 176th out of 180 in 2010, 180 out of 182 in 2011, and 174 out of 176 in 2012.⁴⁰ In 2013, Afghanistan tied North Korea and Syria as the most corrupt country in the world.⁴¹

Integrity Watch Afghanistan reports that Afghans, whom they surveyed in 2010, “thought that the following four sectors were affected most from corruption: justice, security, municipal government, and customs.”⁴² Some commentators and organizations have argued “that many of the forms of corruption noted above are somehow part of the fabric of Afghan culture and society and that they are acceptable to many Afghans.”⁴³ In December 2010, General Petraeus drew a lot of criticism for saying that corruption had always been a part of Afghan history and culture.⁴⁴

Such comments “added to an ongoing debate concerning what levels and types of corruption might be acceptable to Afghans and which they considered unacceptable.”⁴⁵ Integrity Watch Afghanistan provides some insight into this issue through its 2010 Afghanistan Survey. Figure 29 shows the type of corrupt behavior which Afghans said they find acceptable and unacceptable. As the data itself shows, it does not appear that any kind of corruption is acceptable to the Afghan people. Unfortunately, such polls have done little to change the view of Westerners as many U.S. and international officials believe corruption to be an internal problem.

Figure 29: Afghan’s Tolerance of Various types of Corruption

⁴⁰ Ibid., 2.

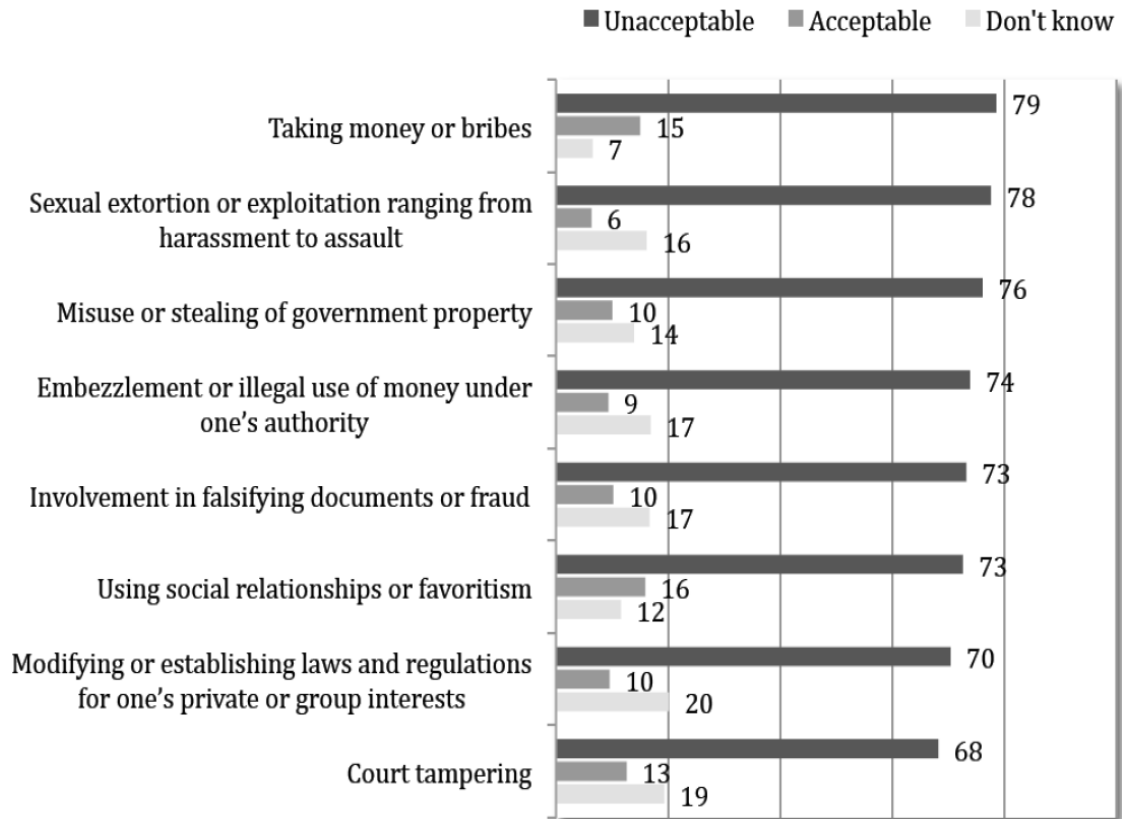
⁴¹ Ibid., 2.

⁴² Eray Basar, “An Overview of Corruption in Afghanistan,” https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Governance/Afghanistan_Corruption_Introduction.pdf [accessed April 4-November 2011], 6.

⁴³ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁴ Tom A. Peter, “Petraeus Comments on Corruption Went too far, says Afghans,” <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/1207/Petraeus-comments-on-corruption-went-too-far-say-Afghans> [accessed April 4-December 7, 2010], 1.

⁴⁵ Eray Basar, “An Overview of Corruption in Afghanistan,” https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Governance/Afghanistan_Corruption_Introduction.pdf [accessed April 4-November 2011], 5.



Source: Afghanistan Integrity Watch, "2010 Afghanistan Survey," p.4 https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo.afg/Documents/Governance/Afghanistan_Corruption_Introduction.pdf

According to a report released by the Asia Foundation on December 11, 2013,

"Afghans see corruption as a major problem in all facets of life and at all levels of government. Roughly half see corruption as a problem in their neighborhood. More see it in their daily life, and almost 60 percent experience it at the hands of local authorities. Roughly two thirds say it is a major problem at the provincial level, and more than three quarters, 77 percent, say corruption is a major problem in Afghanistan as a whole."⁴⁶

Numbers have not been this high since 2006, according to the report, prior to the Coalition troop surge in 2010.⁴⁷

The amount of bribery paid by Afghans has also increased significantly from 2007 to 2012.⁴⁸ In 2007, "\$466 million were paid in bribes, this amount doubled in 2010

⁴⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 78.

⁴⁸ UNODC, "Corruption in Afghanistan," <http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Afghanistan-corruption-survey2010-Eng.pdf> [accessed April 3-Janaury 2010], 4.

and almost tripled in 2012.”⁴⁹ The 2012 data shows an overall increase of 16% in bribery compared to 2010.⁵⁰ As seen in Figure 30, “an estimated 62.6 billion Afs (62,582,667,120 Afs=1,254,543,390 USD) were paid in bribes in 2012. Compared to 2010, this number shows an increase of 16% (8,599,184,118 Afs in 2010).”⁵¹ While in 2010, the average number of bribes per year was 3.4; in 2012 this number rose to 4.0.⁵² Furthermore in 2012, less adults (55,510) paid bribes compared to 2010.⁵³ “This was a 3.4% decrease in the number of Afghan adults who paid bribes in 2012 compared to 2010.”⁵⁴

Figure 30: Estimated Amount of Money Paid in Bribes per Year

Year	Number of Afghan adults who paid bribe	Average paid bribe (AFS)	Average number of bribe paid per year	Total amount of Afghani paid in bribes
2010	1,677,319	9,582	3.36	53,983,483,002
2012	1,621,800	9,528	4.05	62,582,667,120
EQUIVILANT IN USD				
2010	1,677,319	192	3.4	1,079,669,660
2012	1,621,800	191	4.05	1,254,543,390

Source: Afghanistan Integrity Watch, “2012 Key Findings,” p.1 http://www.iwaweb.org/ncs/_2012/key_findings.html

The Rule of Law in Afghanistan: Missing in Inaction

Over the past few years, the international community has “increasingly

⁴⁹ Integrity Watch Afghanistan, “2012 Key Findings,” http://www.iwaweb.org/ncs/_2012/key_findings.html [accessed April 4-January 2013], 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁵¹ Ibid., 1.

⁵² Ibid., 1.

⁵³ Ibid., 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.

recognized that the lack of focus on the rule of law, including security sector reform, have undoubtedly contributed to the boom of organized drug-related criminality and corruption in Afghanistan.”⁵⁵ As a consequence, “the development of Afghanistan’s judicial institutions was considered by many U.S. and ISAF officials to be essential in winning the support of the Afghan population, improving the Afghan government’s credibility and legitimacy, and reducing support for insurgent factions.”⁵⁶

According to Seth G. Jones, there have been several challenges to improving Afghanistan’s justice system.⁵⁷ “First, the central government’s inability to decrease the power of the warlords and exert control over the country impacted justice reform.”⁵⁸ Shortly after the overthrow of the Taliban in December 2001, warlords began taking control of the local in areas under their control. This led to intimidation of centrally appointed judges.⁵⁹

Secondly, the “central government’s inability and unwillingness to address widespread and deep-rooted corruption decreased the effectiveness of the justice system.”⁶⁰ Over the last few years the Attorney General’s Office and Afghan Supreme Court have also been accused of “significant corruption.”⁶¹ Another challenge not mentioned by Jones is “that a majority of Afghans have little or no access to judicial

⁵⁵ Sari Kouvo, “State-building and the rule of law: Lessons from Afghanistan?,” http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fkms1.isn.ethz.ch%2Fserviceengine%2FFiles%2FISN%2F98288%2Fpublicationdocument_singledocument%2F07bc297d-ad2c-4497981d88681189%2Fen%2Ffp_06.pd981d88681189%2Fen%2Ffp_06.pdf&ei=T4PXVMfnDoivggS0uoDoAQ&usg=AFQjCNHXZQwUYfZzjXvLhBi1-jU3liu-pw&bvm=bv.85464276,d.cWc [accessed April 5-March 2009], 7.

⁵⁶ Nick Grono, “Rule of Law and the Justice System in Afghanistan,” <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/speeches/2011/rule-of-law-and-the-justice-system-in-afghanistan.aspx> [accessed April 4-April 28, 2011], 1.

⁵⁷ Seth G. Jones, “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG595.pdf [accessed April 4-January 2008], 85.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 85.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 85.

⁶¹ Kaufman, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters V*, pp. 113-115.

institutions.”⁶² Many of the courts used by the Afghan government were inoperable and those that did function were severely understaffed.⁶³ As a result, a “growing number of Afghans have been forced to accept the rough justice of the Taliban and criminal powerbrokers in areas of the country that lie beyond government control.”⁶⁴

In 2008, press reports began to surface, “indicating that many Afghans who are not sympathetic to the Taliban seem to believe that the Islamic Emirate is more capable than the Afghan government in maintaining law and order, both in terms of policing (catching culprits) and in delivering justice.”⁶⁵ In an attempt to “outgovern” the Afghan government, the Taliban made the re-establishing of their judicial system as their top non-military priority in 2005.⁶⁶ The first signs of Taliban provincial governors and judges date back to 2003, when the Taliban started controlling significant areas of Afghan territory.⁶⁷ The Taliban’s effort initially faced little opposition as the Afghan government and U.S./ISAF forces paid little attention.⁶⁸ Many observers believed “that the new governance system was merely a façade and that its purpose had more to do with public relations and propaganda than anything else.”⁶⁹ From about 2006, district governors and “chiefs of security” also started being reported. By 2010, 33 provincial governors and about 180 district governors were said to be in existence.

⁶² International Crisis Group, “Reforming Afghanistan’s Broken Judiciary,” <http://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/afghanistan/195%20Reforming%20Afghanistans%20Broken%20Judiciary.ashx> [accessed April 4-November 2010], 1.

⁶³ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁴ Nick Grono, “Rule of Law and the Justice System in Afghanistan,” 1.

⁶⁵ Pamela Constable, “As Crime Increases in Kabul, So Does Nostalgia for the Taliban,” *The Washington Post*, September 25, 2008.

⁶⁶ Kaufman, Kraay & Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters V*, pp. 113-115

⁶⁷ Antonio Giustozzi, “Hearts, Minds, and the Barrel of a Gun, the Taliban’s Shadow Government,” http://cco.dodlive.mil/files/2014/02/prism71-80_giustozzi.pdf [accessed April 4-March 2012], 1.

⁶⁸ Angela Priestley, “Taliban Survives Through the Rule of Law,” <http://www.lawyersweekly.com.au/news/taliban-survives-through-rule-of-law-> [accessed April 4-September 7, 2009],

⁶⁹ Antonio Giustozzi, Claudio Franco, & Adam Baczko, “Shadow Justice: How the Taliban run their Judiciary?” http://www.iwaweb.org/_docs/reports/research/shadow_justice-how_the_taliban_run_their_judiciary.pdf [accessed April 4-December 2012], 13.

ISAF also estimated that there were 15 Taliban courts operating in southern Afghanistan during this time, mainly involved with resolving local disputes.⁷⁰ Before 2011, the Taliban mostly maintained fixed courts in known locations, where complainants could approach judges or clerks and file a case.⁷¹ “Many villagers appreciated the quick justice provided by the Taliban, where trials would rarely last more than two weeks.”⁷² David Kilcullen described the work of the Taliban courts as “translating local dispute resolution and mediation into the local rule of law, and thus into political power.”⁷³

Due to the threat of “night raids” the Taliban began relying more on mobile courts in the spring of 2011.⁷⁴ The Taliban were “rapidly forced to abandon the fixed courts system in most if not all provinces and switched to a mobile courts system, where the judges would hold a trial at a different place each time within a particular district.”⁷⁵ These operations also made it more difficult for villagers to access the courts, although the Taliban have adapted “by tasking commanders to enquire in the villages if anybody needed the judges and by giving elders mobile numbers to call.”⁷⁶ By 2011, the Taliban judiciary seemed to have adapted pretty well to the new challenge.⁷⁷

In February 2010, the U.S. State Department issued the *Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy*, which included “enhancing Afghan rule of law” as one of its nine key initiatives for Afghanistan. The *2010 Stabilization Strategy* identified five major ROL program objectives including: (1) capacity building for the formal justice

⁷⁰ Ibid., 72.

⁷¹ Ibid., 72.

⁷² Ibid., 72.

⁷³ Angela Priestley, “Taliban Survives Through the Rule of Law,” 1.

⁷⁴ Antonio Giustozzi, Claudio Franco, & Adam Baczko, “Shadow Justice,” 14.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 14.

sector; (2) strengthening traditional justice; (3) enhanced access to formal justice; (4) corrections sector support; and (5) enhanced and focused outreach.⁷⁸ Justice sector reform was also featured in the *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan*.⁷⁹

Other strategies and guidance created by the U.S. to help improve Afghanistan's judicial institutions include the *U.S. Strategy for Rule of Law in Afghanistan* and a *U.S. Strategy for Anti-Corruption in Afghanistan*. According to the State Department, "the *Rule of Law Strategy* is composed of four pillars, or goals:

Pillar 1: Tackle the pervasive culture of impunity and improve and expand access to the state justice sector, by increasing capacity and reducing corruption in the justice sector's institutions;

Pillar 2: Support corrections reform;

Pillar 3: Provide security and space for traditional justice systems to re-emerge organically in areas cleared of the Taliban and engage closely at the grassroots level to ensure dispute resolution needs in the local communities are being met; and

Pillar 4: Build the leadership capacity of the Afghan government's justice sector, and civil society generally."⁸⁰

Despite these efforts by the international community and Afghan government, "data from the World Bank suggest that Afghanistan's rule of law continues to be one of the least effective—if not the least effective—in the world."⁸¹

The data used by the World Bank measure the extent to which populations have confidence in, and abide by, the rules of society.⁸² They also include perceptions of the incidence of crime, the effectiveness and predictability of the judiciary, and the

⁷⁸ Liana Sun Wyler & Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: U.S. Rule of Law and Justice Sector Assistance," <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41484.pdf> [accessed April 4-November 9, 2010], 19.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

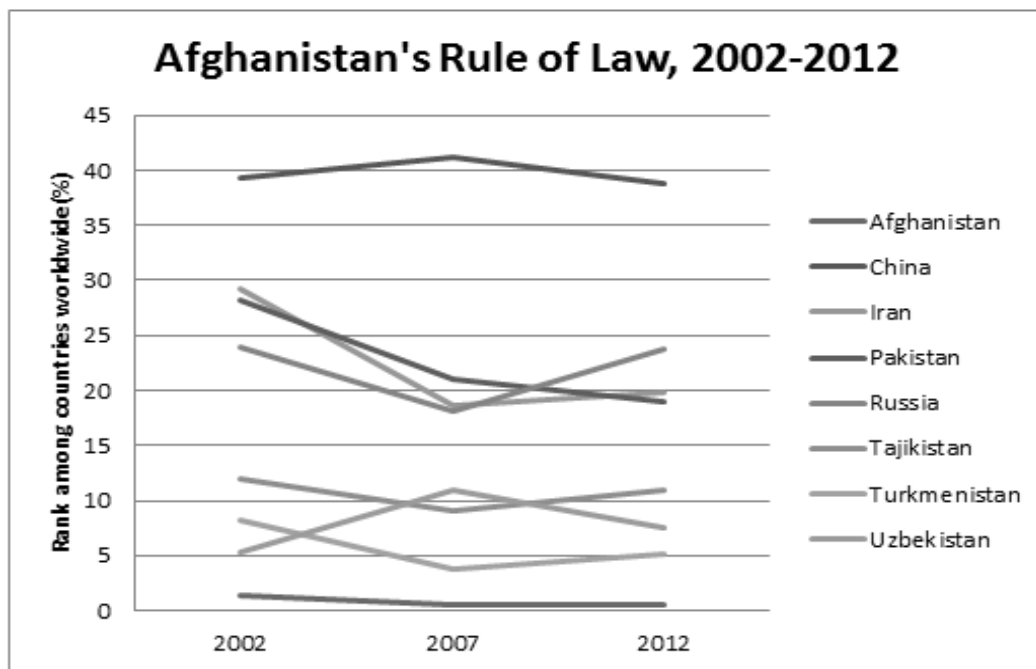
⁸⁰ U.S. Departments of State and Defense, *U.S. Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan*, August 10, 2009.

⁸¹ Seth G. Jones, "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan," 85.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 85.

enforceability of contracts.⁸³ Figure 31 illustrates Afghanistan’s rule of law in comparison to other countries in the region. The data show that Afghanistan’s justice system started from a low base.⁸⁴ When the United States and its Afghan allies overthrew the Taliban in 2001, “Afghanistan had the lowest-ranking justice system in the world,”⁸⁵ and it has improved very little over the course of reconstruction efforts and the surge. In comparison to other countries in the region—such as Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—“Afghanistan’s justice system was one of the least effective and ranked at the bottom.”⁸⁶

Figure 31: Afghanistan Rule of Law Indictors from World Bank



Source: World Bank, *Aggregate Governance Indicators Data, 2002-2012*, (Washington: World Bank, 2013)

Civilian Surge and Renewed Military Focus on District Governance

For more than a decade, improving governance in Afghanistan “has been

⁸³Seth G. Jones, “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” 85.

⁸⁴Ibid., 85.

⁸⁵Ibid., 85.

⁸⁶Ibid., 85.

recognized as the most difficult and critical challenge involving Afghanistan reconstruction.”⁸⁷ Between 2002 and 2010, the international community focused a majority of its assistance and efforts on increasing the capacity and effectiveness of the Afghan national government. “This did little to improve the everyday lives of the Afghan people who had very little contact with the government in Kabul.”⁸⁸ As a result, the COIN strategy adopted by the Obama administration aimed to connect local governance structures to national ones “from the bottom up.”⁸⁹

From 2010 to 2012, the number of representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Aid (USAID), and the Departments of State, Justice, and Agriculture roughly tripled from 300 to 1,000, overseeing additional thousands of contract civilian implementing partners.⁹⁰ At the provincial level, “American-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which previously hosted one of two U.S. State Department or USAID officers now became hubs of many more civilian personnel.”⁹¹

Even though progress was made in certain municipalities, communities, and districts, the United States and international community fell far behind in its efforts to improve local government in critical Afghan districts.⁹² “Of the 1,100 U.S. civilian officials stationed in Afghanistan in 2011, over two-thirds were located in Kabul.”⁹³ This did little to help a majority of Afghans, who lived in rural villages far from the capital.

⁸⁷ Steven H. Sternlieb, “Status of Developing Afghan Governance and Lessons for Future Endeavours,” *International Journal of Security and Development*, Vol 2, No 1, (2013), 1.

⁸⁸ Frances Z. Brown, “Bureaucracy Does Its Thing, Again,” <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2012/10/09/bureaucracy-does-its-thing-again/> [accessed April 8-October 9, 2012], 1.

⁸⁹ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance,” 3.

⁹⁰ Kristin Henderson, “This is War: How USAID workers are trained for work and danger in Afghanistan,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/25/AR2010062503838.html> [accessed April 8-July 4, 2010], 2 see in ⁹⁰ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance,” 3.

⁹¹ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance,”

⁹² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹³ Josh Boak, “In Afghanistan, U.S. ‘Civilian Surge’ Falls Short in Building Local Government,” *The Washington Post*, March 8, 2011.

Moreover, “these experts reinforced the sense of big government coming from Kabul that ultimately alienates populations and leaders in the provinces.”⁹⁴

According to Frances Brown, “efforts to improve Afghanistan’s subnational institutions have failed because the United States’ counterinsurgency strategy rested on three key assumptions that proved unrealistic.”⁹⁵ First, American plans “overestimated the speed with which specific types of governance intervention would yield wider progress.”⁹⁶ In military terminology, “the COIN strategy assumed that the campaign’s quick success in “amassing security efforts” would be mirrored (or closely approached) by the speed with which it amassed governance effects.”⁹⁷ The most high-profile example of this driving assumption was “Operation Moshtarak”, which began on February 15, 2010.⁹⁸

Billed as a model of the new, fully integrated counterinsurgency strategy, “Operation Moshtarak” (Dari for Together or Joint) involved 15,000 American, British, Canadian, Estonian, Danish, and Afghan troops aimed to remove the Taliban from its last stronghold in central Helmand Province.⁹⁹ To distinguish it from previous offensives, General McChrystal announced that NATO and Afghan officials had assembled a large team of Afghan civil servants backed by 1,900 police officers, who would move into the liberated town. “We’ve got a government in a box, ready to roll in,” he declared.¹⁰⁰ Faced with such overwhelming armed might, the Taliban disappeared after a few days of fighting. On February 18, 2010, Afghan troops raised the national flag over the damaged

⁹⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁵ Frances Z. Brown, “Taking Stock of the Surge: From the Bottom Up,” 1.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸ John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, & John K. Wood. *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back: The U.S. at War in Afghanistan and Iraq*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 252.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 252.

¹⁰⁰ Dilip Hiro, “Apocalyptic Realm,” 275.

bazaar.

Unfortunately, the trained Afghan officials promised by McChrystal--who would jump in behind the troops and begin to govern and provide services--never materialized.¹⁰¹ “No Afghan wanted to serve in Marjah, because it was so insecure.”¹⁰² By May, the situation had worsened to the point where the Americans were in control by day but found themselves challenged by the gun-wielding Taliban at night.¹⁰³ Instead of being the blueprint for the future in Afghanistan, Marjah had become in the words of McChrystal, “a bleeding ulcer.”¹⁰⁴ Even apart from the high-profile Marjah campaign, “several other local COIN efforts over-estimated the speed with which local district governors would become locally viewed as ‘legitimate.’”¹⁰⁵

A second miscalculation was “the expectation that the surge’s ‘bottom up’ progress--the result of dedicated work by locally-based U.S. and Afghan personnel--would be matched by ‘top-down’ Afghan-led systemic reforms to make this local progress durable.”¹⁰⁶ The U.S.’s counterinsurgency strategy “deployed hundreds of civilians and uniformed personnel at the district level to encourage district governors to become more accountable to a broader spectrum of the population.”¹⁰⁷ These attempts were viewed with little enthusiasm by the Afghan national government as “it threatened their heavily centralized patronage system to ensure that district-level administrators maintained

¹⁰¹ Rosa Brooks, “Obama vs. the Generals,” http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2013/11/obama-vs-the-generals-99379_Page2.html [accessed April 8-November 2013], 2.

¹⁰² Ahmed Rashid, *Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan, and Afghanistan*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), 103.

¹⁰³ Dilip Hiro, “Apocalyptic Realm,” 275.

¹⁰⁴ Dion Nissenbaum, “McChrystal calls Marjah a ‘bleeding ulcer’ in Afghanistan Campaign,” *New York Times*, May 24, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SR316.pdf> [accessed April 8-September 2012], 6

¹⁰⁶ Frances Z. Brown, “Bureaucracy Does Its Thing, Again,” <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2012/10/09/bureaucracy-does-its-thing-again/> [accessed April 8-October 9, 2012], 1.

¹⁰⁷ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance,” 2.

¹⁰⁷ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance,” 8.

allegiance to the capital.”¹⁰⁸

According to Stephen Biddle, Hamid Karzai depends on the networks’ leadership to deliver political support.

“In exchange, he empowers them with critical appointments, protects them from prosecution, and allows them to prey on the public. The result is a government of informal political deal making rather than rule-based administration by publicly accountable institutions.”¹⁰⁹

Thus, “efforts to increase local accountability as well as local governance are hindered by a lack of political will (or abundance of political obstruction) on top.”¹¹⁰

Finally, the COIN strategy devised by McChrystal and Petraeus rested upon the assumption “that the lack of governance was a universal driver of the insurgency, for which service delivery was the appropriate cure.”¹¹¹ Though this rang true in some parts of southern Afghanistan,” in other areas, particularly some remote parts of eastern Afghanistan, observers suggested that the presence of U.S., ISAF, and ANSF forces became a fueling factor.”¹¹² According to James Fussell, counterinsurgency has proved more difficult to apply in the sparsely-populated mountains of Kunar and Nuristan provinces.¹¹³ Kunar Province in particular, has been a “no-go zone” since it rose up against the Communists in 1978.¹¹⁴

Although most observers see the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar as being the heart of the Taliban insurgency, “the northeastern border province has been described in mythic proportions as one of the most dangerous terrains for U.S. troops

¹⁰⁸ Tom Pike and Eddie J. Brown “Populations as Complex, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹¹¹ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SR316.pdf> [accessed April 8-September 2012], 2.

¹¹² James Fussell, “Kunar and Nuristan: Rethinking U.S. Counterinsurgency Operations,” http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Afghanistan_Report_1_2.pdf [accessed April 8-July 2009], 3.

¹¹³ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁴ Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America’s Longest War*, 61.

anywhere in Afghanistan.”¹¹⁵ U.S. soldiers, who fight a bold enemy in Kunar’s rugged mountains have dubbed it Afghanistan’s ‘Heart of Darkness.’¹¹⁶ From 2007-2011, U.S. forces conducted numerous counterinsurgency operations in an attempt to win over the local tribes’ support and built small outposts to stem the flow of foreign fighters coming in from Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately, U.S. troops were withdrawn from the region in 2011, “after it was determined that their presence there only antagonized the locals and led them to carry out ambushes on U.S. patrols and to attack U.S. combat outposts.”¹¹⁸

Generating Domestic Revenue Remains a Challenge

According to David Kilcullen, “the rate and success of taxation is a measure for government support.”¹¹⁹ In 2008, the Open Budget Index gave Afghanistan a score of 8 out of 100 for the openness of budget information by the Afghan government.¹²⁰ While Afghanistan’s Ministry of Finance continues to expand its tax code, “the central government does not depend on the Afghan people for revenue because of its inability to collect taxes.”¹²¹ Since the population provides little to the national government, the “government has little reason to provide services to the population and yet it must find ways to fund the national budget.”¹²²

As pointed out by Colin Cookman & Caroline Wadhams (2010), “many factors

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 61.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 61.

¹¹⁸ James Fussell, “Kunar and Nuristan,” 38.

¹¹⁹ David Kilcullen, “Measuring Progress in Afghanistan,” 9, seen in Tom Pike and Eddie J. Brown, “Populations as Complex Adaptive Systems: A Case Study of Corruption In Afghanistan, 5.

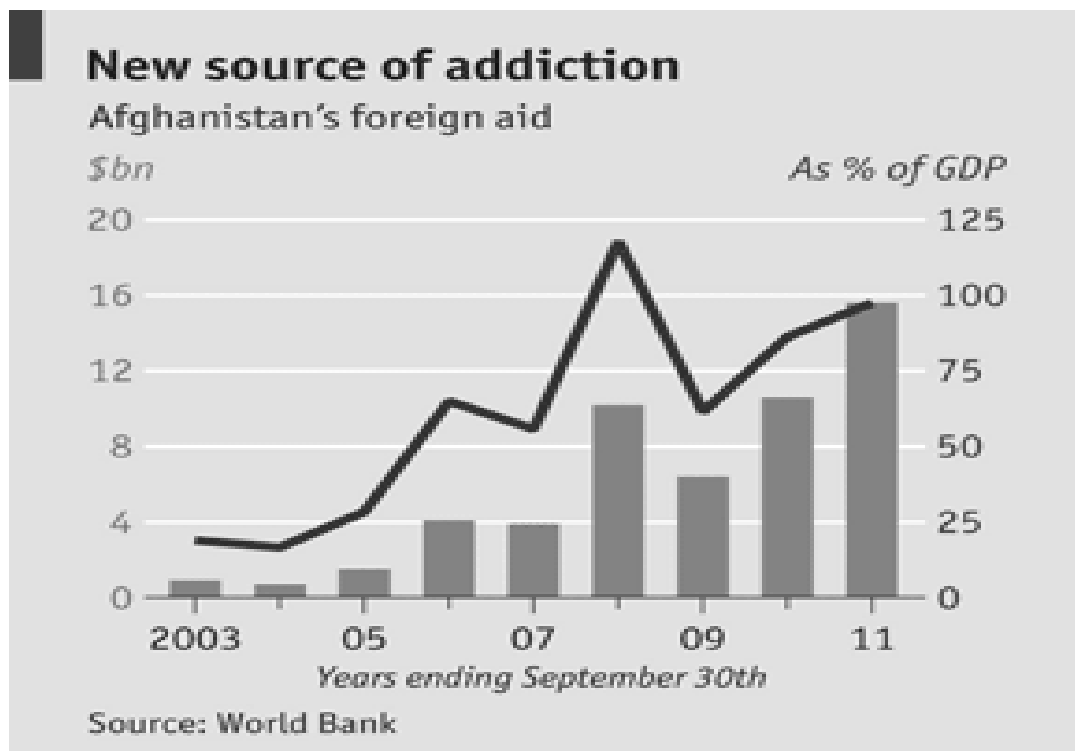
¹²⁰ Open Budget Index, “Afghanistan 2008,” <http://openbudgetindex.org>, [accessed April 7- March 2009], 4, seen in Tom Pike and Eddie J. Brown, “Populations as Complex Adaptive Systems: A Case Study of Corruption In Afghanistan, 5.

¹²¹ Ministry of Finance Afghanistan, “Taxpayer Compliance, seen in Tom Pike and Eddie J. Brown, “Populations as Complex Adaptive Systems: A Case Study of Corruption In Afghanistan, 5.

¹²² Ibid., 5.

have contributed to the international community and Afghan government's limited appetite to cultivate domestic revenue sources.”¹²³ Some of these factors include the government's limited control over local actors, weak popular legitimacy, active insurgent violence, continued access to foreign funding, and the international community's quick-impact security-and humanitarian-focused priorities.¹²⁴ Afghanistan is hugely dependent on aid. A World Bank analysis in May 2012 suggested that only Gaza, the West Bank, and Liberia have been so reliant.¹²⁵ As much as 80 percent of Afghanistan's budget comes from foreign aid.¹²⁶

Figure 32: Afghanistan's Foreign Aid 2003-2011



Source: The Economist.Com, “The Hand that Feeds,” p.1 <http://www.economist.com/node/21558635>

¹²³ Colin Cookman & Caroline Wadhams, “Governance in Afghanistan,” Looking Ahead to What We Leave Behind,” [accessed April 7-May 2010], 25.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 25.

¹²⁵ The Economist.Com, “The Hand that Feeds,” <http://www.economist.com/node/21558635> [accessed April 4-July 14, 2012], 1.

¹²⁶ Joel Brinkley, “Money Pit: The Monstrous Failure of U.S. Aid to Afghanistan,” <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/money-pit-monstrous-failure-us-aid-afghanistan> [accessed April 7-February 2013], 1.

In a recent quarterly report, the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said that, “when security for aid workers is figured in, the total amount of non-military funds Washington has appropriated since 2002 is approximately \$100 billion-more than the U.S. has ever spent to rebuild a country.”¹²⁷ Unfortunately, “aid volume, rarely matched by efficiency.”¹²⁸ Since 2002, “some \$55 billion of aid has flowed into the country and billions of it has flowed out again to pay the salaries of foreign staff and profits to foreign contractors.”¹²⁹ Thus, “only 10-25% of funds given are spent on the ground in Afghanistan.”¹³⁰ Aid has also fed corruption in the government. According to Paul Shinkman, corruption costs the Afghan government roughly \$4 billion each year.¹³¹

Another factor that has contributed to the Afghan government’s inability to cultivate domestic revenue is the withholding of funds by officials responsible for customs revenue collection.¹³² Over the last decade, “the government has clashed with local efforts to renationalize their lucrative sources of income.”¹³³ One example of this is “the central government’s showdown in 2004, with Herat’s former governor, the warlord Ismail Khan, for the tax revenue from major border crossing points between Afghanistan and Iran.”¹³⁴ The Afghan government marginalized the famous warlord from Herat and secured profits from the Herat border.¹³⁵ It increased the government’s tax revenue six-fold from that border crossing, from \$2 million U.S. dollars a month in 2001 to \$12

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹²⁸ The Economist.Com, “The Hand that Feeds,” 1.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 1.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹³¹ Ibid., 4.

¹³² Colin Cookman & Caroline Wadhams, “Governance in Afghanistan,” 25.

¹³³ Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 234-246 seen in Tom Pike and Eddie J. Brown “Populations as Complex, 5.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 5.

million U.S. dollars a months in 2005.¹³⁶

Upon review, Afghanistan's score on the Open Budget Index has greatly improved over the last six years. The Open Budget Survey "assesses whether the central government in each country surveyed makes eight key budget documents available to the public, as well as whether the data contained in these documents is comprehensive, timely, and useful."¹³⁷ The survey uses internationally accepted criteria to assess each country's budget transparency developed by multilateral organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the International Organization for Supreme Audit Institutions (INTSOAI). The scores on 95 of the 125 Open Budget Survey questions are used to calculate objective scores and rankings of each surveyed country's relative transparency.¹³⁸

Since 2008, Afghanistan's score has risen 51 points.¹³⁹ In 2010, Afghanistan's OBI score rose 13 points to 21 in 2010. However, the biggest increase came in 2012, when Afghanistan's OBI score rose another 38 points to 59.¹⁴⁰ According to Open Budget Index,

"Afghanistan's score indicates that the government provides the public with only some information on the national government's budget and financial activity during the course of the budget year. This makes it challenging for citizens to hold the government accountable for its management of the public's money."¹⁴¹

Nonetheless, Afghanistan's OBI scores were the second greatest improvement in budget transparency over all countries in the world in 2012. The score of 59 also "surpasses the

¹³⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹³⁷ Open Budget Index, "Afghanistan 2012" <http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/OBI2012-AfghanistanCS-English.pdf> [accessed April 7- January 23, 2013], 1.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 1.

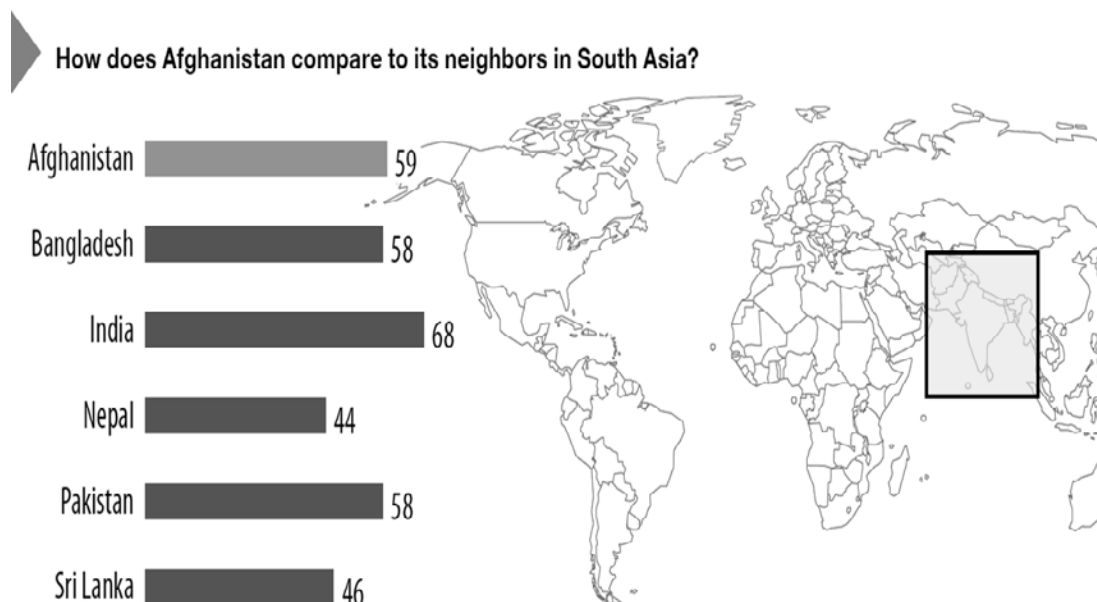
¹³⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 2.

target of 40 agreed upon by Afghanistan and the international community in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.”¹⁴² Compared to other countries in South Asia, Afghanistan received one of the highest scores from Open Budget Index in 2012. Only India (68), received a higher score.

Figure 33: OBI Scores for South Asia



Source: Open Budget Index, “Afghanistan 2012,” p.2, <http://mof.govaf/en/news/16855>

¹⁴² Ibid., 1.

CHAPTER VII: EFFORTS TO TRAIN & EQUIP A COMPETENT AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCE

We will work with the Afghan government to train security forces, and sustain a counterterrorism force, which ensures that al Qaeda can never again establish a safe haven to launch attacks against us or our allies.

– President Barack Obama

As the United States and NATO continue the withdrawal of most of their troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, “the U.S. military and its Coalition partners are increasingly shifting security responsibilities to Afghan security forces.”¹ According to Bill Rogio (201), “the success of this security transition depends greatly on the strength and competence of the Afghan military and police.”² Thus the “training of the newly-mustered Afghan forces became the linchpin of the United States’ counterinsurgency strategy, which hinged upon the work of trainers with Afghan security forces.”³

Unlike previous military doctrines, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps’ 2006 doctrine for counterinsurgency (*FM 3-24*) “underlines the need for assistance from the military, along with other government agencies and Coalition partners, to organize the host nation security forces required to establish and maintain security and stability within their borders.”⁴ This assistance may include developing, equipping, training, and employing indigenous security forces to help carry out the counterinsurgency campaign.

¹ Bill Roggio, “Green-on-Blue Attacks in Afghanistan: The Data,” <http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/green-on-blue-attacks-in-afghanistan-the-data/> [accessed April 10-August 23, 2012], 1.

² Ibid., 1.

³ Ibid., 2.

⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, (Washington: Department of Defense, 2006), 5-68 seen in Robert Cassidy, “Indigenous Forces and Sanctuary Denial: Enduring Counterinsurgency Imperatives,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/44-cassidy.pdf> [accessed April 10-February 9, 2008], 6.

As of January 17, 2014, the United States has spent \$59 billion funding security forces in Afghanistan.¹ Most of these funds (\$57.5 billion) “were appropriated through the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) and provided to the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A).”² Its purpose is to build, equip, train, and sustain the ANSF, which comprises the Afghan National Army, the Afghan Air Force, and the Afghan National Police. Within these units, “specialized personnel round out the country’s security capabilities, including border police, public protection forces, local police, narcotics officers, and communications and logistical staff.”³

Despite the progress made in training Afghanistan’s security forces, “the effectiveness, professionalism, and state of readiness of this security apparatus are uneven.”⁴ Within police units specifically, drug abuse, desertion, and violence remain constant challenges.⁵ The army also faces issues related to ethnic factionalism and poor civilian oversight.⁶ Here is a breakdown of each security component, and its current state of effectiveness:

Afghan National Army: The ANA is widely seen as the most capable branch of the country’s security forces.⁷ The United States was the lead nation for building the ANA, although the French, British, Turkish, and instructors from other coalition countries were also involved. “The ANA structure includes 6 corps located in different

¹ Jacob Siegel, “The Afghan Money pit: How Millions of Dollars Were Wasted,” <http://www.thedailybeast.com/the-hero-project/articles/2013/10/30/the-afghan-money-pit-how-millions-of-dollars-were-wasted.html> [accessed April 10-October 30, 2013], 3.

² Ibid., 3.

³ Greg Bruno, “Afghanistan’s National Security Forces,” <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/afghanistans-national-security-forces/p19122> [accessed April 10-August 19, 2010], 2.

⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ Monish Gulati, “Afghan National Security Forces-Hiccups Continue,” <http://www.irgamag.com/component/k2/item/680-afghan-national-security-forces-hiccups-continue> [accessed April 15-December 29, 2012], 2.

⁷ Seth G. Jones, “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG595.pdf [accessed April 4-January 2008], 72.

parts of the country, 1 division (consisting of 2 brigades) based in Kabul, and 24 additional brigades (including 2 Mobile Strike Force brigades commanded from Kabul, and deployed as needed throughout the country).”⁸ The ANA is approximately 96% complete with fielding forces with 11 specialty battalions remaining to be fielded.⁹ As of December 30, 2013, the size of the Afghan Army is roughly 185,386 soldiers including nearly 11,000 Special Forces.¹⁰

Afghan National Police: Made up of 152,600 personnel, “the ANP looks solid on paper.”¹¹ Currently, “the Afghan Uniformed Police are responsible for public safety and general enforcement and public safety with the Border Police patrolling the borders and conducting counter-smuggling operations.”¹² There are also a number of more specialized police units conducting operations like CT missions, criminal investigations, and counter narcotics patrols.¹³

According to General McChrystal, the Taliban “put a severe amount of pressure on the police, particularly in areas where security is immature.”¹⁴ Moreover, the Pentagon has acknowledged that the development of Afghanistan's police force “has been hindered by a lack of reform, corruption, insufficient U.S. military trainers and advisors, and a lack of unity of effort within the international community.”¹⁵ Since 2011, there have been some signs of progress as the number of units considered capable of

⁸ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghanistan National Army (ANA),” <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-national-army-ana> [accessed April 10-June 2010], 1.

⁹ ISAF, “Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) October 2013,” 1

¹⁰ Jacob Siegel, “The Afghan Money pit: How Millions of Dollars Were Wasted,” <http://www.thedailybeast.com/the-hero-project/articles/2013/10/30/the-afghan-money-pit-how-millions-of-dollars-were-wasted.html> [accessed April 10-October 30, 2013], 3.

¹¹ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghan National Police (ANP),” <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-national-police-apa> [accessed April 10-June 2010], 1.

¹² Ibid., 1.

¹³ Ibid., 1.

¹⁴ “Interview with General Stanley McChrystal,” NPR, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=121248927> [accessed April 10-December 9, 2009], 2.

¹⁵ Ibid., 2.

independently planning and conducting operations has risen, albeit more slowly than the Afghan Army.¹⁶

Afghan Air Force: As of December 2013, there are approximately 6,529 Afghans serving in the AAF, including aircrew and maintenance and support personnel.¹⁷ “The AAF currently has a fleet of 100 fixed-wing and rotary aircraft, including 2 C-130s and 12 Mi-17 helicopters that were delivered in September 2013.”¹⁸ The re-establishment of the AAF began later than that of the Army and Police and is expected to transition to autonomous operations by 2017.¹⁹

According to Seth G. Jones, the competence of Afghanistan’s security forces is difficult to judge for two reasons.²⁰ First, “many of the most useful metrics are qualitative rather than quantitative and difficult to measure accurately.”²¹ Examples include the performance of security forces in conducting cordon-and-search operations, border security, patrols, riot control, intelligence collection, and combat operations.²² Second, “little data has been systematically collected for several decades in Afghanistan.”²³ For example, “there are no reliable statistics on homicide rates, which may provide some indication of the competence of police forces.”²⁴

Despite these difficulties, there are a few quantitative indicators that can be used to measure ANSF progress:

1. Recruitment versus desertion rates: It is said that when an organization’s

¹⁶ Greg Bruno, “Afghanistan’s National Security Forces,” <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/afghanistans-national-security-forces/p19122> [accessed April 10-August 19, 2010], 2.

¹⁷ ISAF, “Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) October 2013,” 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰ Seth G. Jones, “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” 67.

²¹ Anthony H. Cordesman. “Afghan National Security Forces,” 124.

²² Seth G. Jones, “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” 67.

²³ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

recruitment rates are higher than its desertion rates, morale is high.²⁵

However, “when desertion rates rise along with other indicators such as short-term AWOL and increased sickness rates, organizational morale is likely to be dropping.”²⁶ Thus, the ANSF has tried to increase their recruitment and retention efforts.

2. ANSF Literacy Training: “Literacy is a critical force enabler and force multiplier for the ANSF.”²⁷ Literacy enables Afghan National Security Force service members to learn required skills at vocational schools, enhances instruction on human rights and the rule of law, and promotes the long-term sustainability of the force as well as post-service economic opportunity.²⁸
3. Assessment Levels of Afghan National Security Forces: These ratings reflect an ANSF unit’s overall operational effectiveness; however, the overall rating is derived from a more detailed assessment of each unit. The current rating system uses six color-coded rating definitions-(1) fully capable, (2) capable, (3) partially capable, (4) developing, (5) established, and (6) not assessed to evaluate ANSF units at the brigade and regional levels each month. In addition, this ratings system “focuses on assessing specific components of the units, such as infantry and communications, against one overall and five targeted categories.”²⁹

²⁵ David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, 68

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁷ Michael J. Faughnan, “Afghan National Security Forces Literacy Program,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/634-faughnan.pdf> [accessed April 14- January 4, 2011], 2.

²⁸ William B. Caldwell & Nathan K. Finney, “Security, Capacity, and Literacy,” [http://usacac.army.mil/CA/C2/Military Review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20110228_art006.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CA/C2/Military%20Review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20110228_art006.pdf) [accessed April 14-January & February 2011], 23.

²⁹ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014Jan30QR.pdf> [accessed April 15-January 30, 2014], 85.

4. Green-on-Blue attacks: According to Roggio and Lindquist (2012), “operations involving combined action - where Coalition units partner with local police, military, and civilian forces, tend to indicate improved performance by all partners in the action.”³⁰ A main goal of the U.S.’s COIN strategy was the build-up and training of Afghanistan’s security forces. This has placed U.S. and NATO troops at increasing risk as the drawdown continues and Taliban efforts to infiltrate Afghan forces are being ramped up.³¹

ANSF Recruiting and Retention

An effective Afghan National Security Force is the “main plank of the ongoing security transition in Afghanistan and critically influences the country’s political and economic transitions.”³² Since 2009, the size of the ANSF has nearly doubled.³³ As of January 2014, ANSF’s assigned force strength was 334,852, according to data provided by CSTC-A.³⁴ This is short of the goal to have an end-strength of 352,000 ANSF personnel by October 2012.³⁵

The goal had been published in the Defense Department’s April 2012 *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*.³⁶ When the end strength was not met, the DoD revised the goal to 352,000 ANSF personnel by 2014 (187,000 ANA by

³⁰ Bill Roggio, “Green-on-Blue Attacks in Afghanistan: The Data,” <http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/green-on-blue-attacks-in-afghanistan-the-data/> [accessed April 10-August 23, 2012], 1.

³¹ Ibid., 1.

³² Monish Gulati, “Afghan National Security Forces-Hiccups Continue,” <http://www.irgamag.com/component/k2/item/680-afghan-national-security-forces-hiccups-continue> [accessed April 15-December 29, 2012], 1.

³³ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, November 2013,” http://www.defense.gov/pubs/October_1230_Report_Master_Nov7.pdf [accessed April 15-November 2013], 3

³⁴ Ibid., 85.

³⁵ Ibid., 85.

³⁶ Department of Defense, “Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/Report_Final_SecDef_04_27_12.pdf [accessed April 15-April 2012], 13.

December 2012, 157,000 ANP by February 2013, and 8,000 Air Force by December 2014).³⁷ Neither the ANA nor the ANP met their end-strength goal by the revisited deadline, as shown in Figure 34.

Figure 34: ANSF Assigned Strength

ANSF ASSIGNED STRENGTH, AUGUST 20, 2013			
ANSF Component	Current Target	Status as of 12/2013	Difference Between Current Strength and Target End-Strength Goals
Afghan National Army	187,000 personnel by 12/2012	178,816	-8,184
Afghan National Police	157,000 personnel by 2/2013	149,466	-7,534
Afghan Air Force	8,000 personnel by 12/2014	6,570	-1,430
ANSF Total	352,000	334,852	-17,148

Sources: DOD, "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," 12/2012, p. 56; CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/30/2013; CENTCOM, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/15/2014.

For the Afghan National Police, the process was the same.³⁸ An April 2011 SIGAR audit of ANP workforce and payroll strength found that the Ministry of Interior (MOI) could not determine the number of personnel that work for the ANP because it had "been unable to reconcile personnel records or verify data in its personnel systems and databases Another challenge has been the inclusion of civilians in counts of ANSF personnel."³⁹ A February 2012 DoD OIG report on the Afghan National Army payroll funding "found that ANA finance officers were including civilians in their count of ANA personnel for the purposes of payroll reporting."⁴⁰ CSTC-A also noted that civilians had

³⁷ SIGAR, "Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014," 85.

³⁸ SIGAR, "Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014," 87.

³⁹ Department of Defense Inspector General, "Semiannual Report to the Congress," http://www.dodig.mil/sar/SAR_OCT_2012_web.pdf [accessed April 15-February 2012], 99.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 99.

been counted as part of ANSF assigned force strength, but were later removed from those counts.⁴¹

The ANSF is also “struggling with the fact that its recruitment rate is not matching its wastage rate which has been pegged at a whopping 30 percent a year.”⁴² Given its present strength, the ANSF needs to recruit approximately 60,000 personnel every year.⁴³ The “high wastage rate has been attributed to many factors.”⁴⁴ First is the low re-enlistment rate.⁴⁵ According to the DoD,

“about one-quarter of all recruits decline to sign up for extended service beyond their initial three-year contract for various reasons such as poor leadership, inadequate living and working conditions, the lack of a good program for leaves and the effects of seasonal demands for harvesting and planting.”⁴⁶

There is also the issue of desertion. According to the Afghan Defense Ministry 7-10 percent of Afghan troops desert each year, while other estimates put it as high as 20 percent.⁴⁷

The effective strength of the Afghan National Security Forces has also been adversely affected by the casualty rate.⁴⁸ With progress of the security transition the casualty rate of the ANSF has increased.⁴⁹ The ANA had more than 1,100 casualties in the first six months of 2013; “this is almost more than the previous year’s high of 1,200

⁴¹ Ibid., 99.

⁴² Monish Gulati, “Afghan National Security Forces-Hiccups Continue,” <http://www.irgamag.com/component/k2/item/680-afghan-national-security-forces-hiccups-continue> [accessed April 15-December 29, 2012], 2.

⁴³ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014Jan30QR.pdf> [accessed April 15-January 30, 2014], 6.

⁴⁴ Monish Gulati, “Afghan National Security Forces-Hiccups Continue,” 2.

⁴⁵ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014Jan30QR.pdf> [accessed April 15-January 30, 2014], 6.

⁴⁶ Department of Defense, “Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” 24.

⁴⁷ Rod Nordland, “Afghan Army’s High Turnover Clouds U.S. Exist Plan,” *New York Times*, October 15, 2012.

⁴⁸ Monish Gulati, “Afghan National Security Forces-Hiccups Continue,” <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/national-security-forces/p19122>, [accessed April 16-August 19, 2010], 2.

⁴⁹ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014Jan30QR.pdf> [accessed April 15-January 30, 2014], 7.

in 2012.”⁵⁰ During this same time period, the ANP suffered more than 2,200 fatalities.⁵¹

ANA Strength

Widely seen as the most capable branch of the ANSF, the ANA is going to be a key player in Afghanistan’s transition after 2014.⁵² According to Gautam Das (2012), “it is a “new-look army, combining elements of organization from the older Afghan Army pattern with some completely new elements copied from the U.S. Army.”⁵³ The ANA was also responsible for 95% of all reported operations carried out in Afghanistan in 2013.⁵⁴ Despite improvement in performance and training, attrition continues to be a major challenge for the ANA.⁵⁵

The annual attrition rate for the Afghan National Army in 2013 was 34.4 percent.⁵⁶ Between January and November 2013, 38,916 ANA personnel left the service.⁵⁷ The ANA has also suffered serious losses from fighting. Between December 2011 and November 2013, the ANA had 2,055 personnel killed in action (KIA) and 10,484 wounded in action (WIA).⁵⁸ The United States has tried to address all of these weaknesses by (1) applying itself to the training of the new recruits and active mentoring of ANA units and sub-units in the field, (2) increasing the salaries of ANA soldiers and

⁵⁰ The Guardian.com, “Taliban Kill 1,100 members of Afghan Security Forces in Six Months,” <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/23/taliban-afghan-security-forces-nato> [accessed April 16-January 23, 2013], 1.

⁵¹ Monish Gulati, “Afghan National Security Forces-Hiccups Continue,” <http://www.irgamag.com/component/k2/item/680-afghan-national-security-forces-hiccups-continue> [accessed April 15-December 29, 2012], 2.

⁵² Ibid., 2.

⁵³ Gautam Das, “The Afghan National Army in 2014,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-afghan-national-army-in-2014> [accessed April 16-December 4, 2012], 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁵⁵ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014Jan30QR.pdf> [accessed April 15-January 30, 2014], 7.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁸ Emma Graham-Harrison, “Afghan Troop Deaths up almost 80% in 2013 Fighting Season, says Pentagon,” <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/08/afghan-troop-casualties-up-almost-80-in-2013-fighting-season-says-pentagon> [accessed April 16-November 8, 2013], 1.

ANP police officers.⁵⁹ “When the U.S. first began its army-building effort, it was offering a mere three-year term of enlistment and a meagre salary, and the desertion rate before completion of their enlistment period was as high as 25 percent of enrollment.”⁶⁰ This led to a recruitment crisis that ISAF failed to make public.⁶¹

It was only in December 2009, that a NATO advisory team announced that a disparity in pay was a major problem in recruiting.⁶² According to the report, “a fighter in the Taliban could make \$250-\$300 a month while the average ANA soldier got \$120-\$180 a month.”⁶³ Shortly after, ANA and ANP salaries were raised to levels closer to \$240 a month. “This raised ANA recruiting from average lows far below the required level-and only 831 in August 2009—to 2,659 in the first week of September 2009—roughly half of the entire monthly quota level.”⁶⁴ It also led some 60 deserters out of 80 in one unit to return to service once they learned that the new pay system was in effect.⁶⁵

As of December 30, 2013, the overall end strength of the Afghan National Army was 185,386 personnel (178,816 Army and 6,529 Air Force).⁶⁶ This total includes “10,251 ANA personnel and 41 Air Force personnel who were AWOL, 10,905 trainees, students and those awaiting assignment as well as 5,010 cadets.”⁶⁷ Determining ANA strength “continues to prove challenging as limited details were available to account for

⁵⁹ Gautam Das, “The Afghan National Army in 2014,” 2.

⁶⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, “Afghan National Security Forces: What it Will Take to Implement the ISAF Strategy,” https://csis.org/files/publication/101115_Cordesman_AfghanNationalSecurityForces_Web.pdf [accessed April 16-November 2010], 67.

⁶¹ Spencer Ackerman, “Taliban Pays Its Troops Better than Karzai Pays His,” *New York Times*, July 27, 2010.

⁶² Gautam Das, “The Afghan National Army in 2014,” 2.

⁶³ Spencer Ackerman, “Taliban Pays Its Troops Better than Karzai Pays His,” 1.

⁶⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman, “Afghan National Security Forces: What it Will Take to Implement the ISAF Strategy,” https://csis.org/files/publication/101115_Cordesman_AfghanNationalSecurityForces_Web.pdf [accessed April 16-November 2010], 67.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁶⁶ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014Jan30QR.pdf> [accessed April 15-January 30, 2014], 87.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

the 126,659 personnel assigned to the ANA's combat forces this quarter.”⁶⁸ SIGAR determined that these forces included personnel in the following categories: (1) Present for Duty of “Combat Strength”, 62,753 (50%); (2) Unavailable (including personnel in combat, and on leave, but not personnel AWOL) 54,862 (43%); and (3) Absent without Leave (AWOL), 9,043 (7%).⁶⁹

ANP Strength

As of December 31, 2013, the United States has spent \$15.8 billion on building, training, and sustaining Afghanistan's National Police force.⁷⁰ In November 2013, “the overall strength of the ANP was 149,466 personnel, including 106,784 Afghan Uniform Police (AUP), 20,902 Afghan Border Police (ABP), 13,597 Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), 2,850 in the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), and 5,333 students in training.”⁷¹ Like many countries' police forces, Afghanistan's police force continues to be subject to local politics and national political interference.⁷² This is “exemplified by the high turnover rates of district chiefs, who are appointed directly by the President of Afghanistan.”⁷³

The overall strength of the Afghan National Police continues to be affected by turnover and attrition as well.⁷⁴ Since October 2013, the overall strength of the ANP has

⁶⁸ Ibid., 87.

⁶⁹ Gautam Das, “The Afghan National Army in 2014,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/print/13581> [accessed April 14-December 4 2012], 1.

⁷⁰ Jacob Siegel, “The Afghan Money pit: How Millions of Dollars Were Wasted,” <http://www.thedailybeast.com/the-hero-project/articles/2013/10/30/the-afghan-money-pit-how-millions-of-dollars-were-wasted.html> [accessed April 10-October 30, 2013], 3.

⁷¹ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014, 96.

⁷² Jonathan Schroden, Patricio Asfura-Heim, Catherine Norman, & Jerry Meyerle, “Were the Afghan National Security Forces Successful in 2013?,” http://www.cna.org/sites/default/files/research/ANSF_in_2013.pdf [accessed April 13-January14], 5.

⁷³ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁴ SIGAR, “Afghan Security Forces: Despite Reported Successes, Concerns Remain about Literacy Training Program Results, Contract Oversight, Transition, and Sustainment,” http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR_14-30-AR.pdf [accessed April 11-January 2014], 4.

decreased by more than 3,191 police officers.⁷⁵ According to CSTC-A, “unlike the ANA, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) does not report ANP personnel who are on leave, AWOL, sick, or on temporary assignment in its personnel reports.”⁷⁶ For this reason, it is not known what the actual operational strength of the ANP is at any given time.⁷⁷

ANSF Literacy Training

Devastated by decades of conflict and neglect, “Afghanistan suffers from low levels of literacy among the general population and even more so among recruits in the Afghan National Security Forces.”⁷⁸ The Afghan Ministry of Education estimates that only about one-third of the Afghan population can read or write while approximately 13 percent of ANSF recruits possess these abilities.⁷⁹ According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the overall literacy rate among Afghans over the age of 15 is approximately 28%.⁸⁰

This varies from a high of 58 percent in Kabul to a low of 12 percent in Helmand province.⁸¹ NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A) testing shows that fewer than 14% of the recruits entering the ANA and ANP have a first grade level of literacy.⁸² Thus, illiteracy in the Afghan National Security Forces “remains a major obstacle to effectively developing a capable and self-sustaining force that can operate independently and defend the Afghan people.”⁸³ According to Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell,

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁹ Morten Sigsgaard, “Education and Fragility in Afghanistan: A Situational Analysis,” http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/education_and_fragility_in_afghanistan.pdf [accessed April 14-September 2009], 15.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁸¹ Ibid., 15.

⁸² Michael J. Faughnan, “Afghan National Security Forces Literacy Program,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/634-faughnan.pdf> [accessed April 14- January 4, 2011], 1.

⁸³ Gopal Ratnam & Anthony Capaccio, “Afghan Military’s Illiteracy Complicating U.S. Departure,” 1.

the former commander of NTM-A, “literacy is the foundation of a professional military and police force.”⁸⁴

In his article, *Afghan National Security Forces Literacy Program*, Michael J. Faughnan (2011), points out that literacy is an enabler (a supporting capability).⁸⁵ Teaching illiterate soldiers through memorization and repetition may work well for some military tasks, but not all.⁸⁶ For example,

“literacy is not a requirement for accurate rifle marksmanship, but it is required for scores of other specialties. Medics must be able to read the labels of a drug prior to administering it. Field Artillery fire direction specialists must be able to read and perform mathematical functions to compute accurate firing data for the guns.”⁸⁷

Faughnan also points out that literacy can serve as a recruiting tool for the ANSF.⁸⁸

“After more than thirty years of warfare, many young Afghans in the prime recruiting age group did not have the opportunity to attend school as children.”⁸⁹ Thus, the ability to read is considered by many Afghans to be a badge of honor.⁹⁰ Providing literacy instruction to this group “helps them to overcome this deficit and prepares them for a more productive life, whether they make the ANSF a career or move into another field.”⁹¹

Finally, literacy can also help combat corruption within the ANSF. According to Michael J. Faughnan (2012), illiterate soldiers and police are unable to read their paychecks to make sure that they are being paid the proper amount. These soldiers also

⁸⁴ William B. Caldwell & Nathan K. Finney, “Security, Capacity, and Literacy,” [http://usacac.army.mil/CA/C2/Military Review/Archives/](http://usacac.army.mil/CA/C2/Military%20Review/Archives/) [accessed April 14-January & February 2011], 23.

⁸⁵ Michael J. Faughnan, “Afghan National Security Forces Literacy Program,” 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁹ William B. Caldwell & Nathan K. Finney, “Security, Capacity, and Literacy,” 24.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹¹ Michael J. Faughnan, “Afghan National Security Forces Literacy Program,” 2.

can't perform basic inventory tasks because they are unable to count the number of rifles on hand or account for the equipment issued to them.⁹² Being literate would allow these soldiers and policeman to carry out these common tasks and make supervisors and commanders more accountable.

During the last six years, the United States has spent more than \$200 million on a program to teach Afghan soldiers how to read and write.⁹³ Before the implementation of the ANSF Literacy program in 2009, literacy standards for recruits "were virtually non-existent" as recruits "could literally be pulled off the street and made a police officer."⁹⁴ Currently, the ANSF's literacy program is based on a 312-hour curriculum.⁹⁵ According to CSTC-A, in order to progress from illiteracy to functional literacy, a student may take as many as seven tests.⁹⁶ The students' performance determines if he or she progresses to the next training level.⁹⁷

As seen in Figure 35 below, Level 1 literacy provides an individual with the ability to read and write single words, count up to 1,000, and add and subtract whole numbers.⁹⁸ At Level 2, an individual can read and write sentences, carry out basic multiplication and division, and identify units of measurement.⁹⁹ At Level 3, an individual has achieved functional literacy and can identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute, and use printed and written materials. NTM-A/CSTC-A noted

⁹² Michael J. Faughnan, "Afghan National Security Forces Literacy Program," <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/634-faughnan.pdf> [accessed April 14- January 4, 2011], 2.

⁹³ Josh Rogin, "After \$200 million, Afghan Soldiers Still Can't Read," 1.

⁹⁴ Tom Vanden Brook, "Inspector General: Literacy lags among Afghan Troops," *USA Today*, January 28, 2014.

⁹⁵ SIGAR, "Afghan National Security Forces: Despite Reported Success, Concerns Remain about Literacy Program Results, Contract Oversight, Transition, and Sustainment," http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR_14-30-AR.pdf [accessed April 14-January 28, 2014], 1

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

that at Level 3, the student is transitioning from learning to read to reading to learn. Since 2009, a total of 220,530 ANSF recruits have passed Level 1 of Dari or Pashto literacy and numeracy training while 70,350 ANSF personnel have achieved Level Three, or functional literacy under the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization standard.¹⁰⁰

Figure 35: Training Provided under NTM-A/CSTC-A’s ANSF Literacy Program

Literacy Level	Number of Hours	Class Location	Instruction Provided
Level 1	64	Training centers ^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, write, pronounce, and identify letters • Read and write short words • Read and write one’s own name • Count up to 1,000 • Identify, write, and order numbers up to 1,000 • Add and subtract triple-digit whole numbers
Level 2	128	Fielded units ^b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, write, and explain descriptive texts • Spell commonly used words • Carry out double-digit by single-digit multiplication and division • Identify units of measurement
Level 3	120	Fielded units ^b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, write, and comprehend short paragraphs • Use correct punctuation to aid meaning and understanding • Add and subtract using six-digits numbers • Multiply and divide with three-digit numbers.

Source: SIGAR, “Afghan National Security Forces: Despite Reported Success, Concerns Remain about Literacy Program Results, Contract Oversight, Transition, and Sustainment,” p. 9, http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR_14-30-AR.pdf

Despite these numbers, a report released by SIGAR in January 2014 concluded that the program appears to have had a limited impact on actual literacy levels within the ANSF.¹⁰¹ According to the report, “the ANSF has a remarkably high attrition rate, between 30 and 50 percent a year.”¹⁰² Thus, many of the soldiers who have been educated at U.S. taxpayer expense are no longer in the Afghan Army. The SIGAR report

¹⁰⁰ Josh Rogin, “After \$200 million, Afghan Soldiers Still Can’t Read,” <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/01/28.html> [accessed April 14- January 28, 2014], 1.

¹⁰¹ SIGAR, “Afghan National Security Forces: Despite Reported Success, Concerns Remain about Literacy Program Results, Contract Oversight, Transition, and Sustainment,” http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR_14-30-AR.pdf [accessed April 14-January 28, 2014], 1.

¹⁰² Ibid., 3.

also identified several other flaws in the literacy program. “The program did not track students after their courses to be able to follow up on their progress.”¹⁰³ Further, the program, “which relied on private contractors to teach the courses, did not specify what the curriculum should contain or monitor the majority of sites where classes were held.”¹⁰⁴ This led to what the report called poor implementation by contractors.¹⁰⁵ The report also found that between July 2012 and February 2013, 45 percent of Afghan National Police sent to the field received no literacy training.¹⁰⁶

Since the release of this report, the United States has cut back on the number of sites where literacy courses are being taught in order to promote better oversight.¹⁰⁷ NATO has also worked with the Afghan government to implement new contracts for literacy training of the ANSF, with more stringent metrics to measure literacy performance and limiting contract scope to encourage better contractor performance.¹⁰⁸ According to recent reports, this new oversight has saved the United States \$19 million.¹⁰⁹ CSTC-A also said responsibility for literacy training of ANA personnel in the field will transition to the ANA between July 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014. Literacy training at ANA training centers will transition by December 2014.¹¹⁰

Assessment Levels of Afghan National Security Forces

Passed in 2007, the Nation Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 directed the Department of Defense to report on its assessment of the operational

¹⁰³ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁴ Mattie Quinn & R. Jeffrey Smith, “U.S. Literacy Program for Afghan Military Comes Up Short,” 2.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰⁶ Josh Rogin, “After \$200 million, Afghan Soldiers Still Can’t Read,” 2.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁹ Heath Druzin, “Watchdog: \$200 million literacy program misses mark in Afghanistan,” <http://www.stripes.com/news/watchdog-200-million-literacy-program-misses-mark-in-afghanistan-1.264431> [accessed April 14- January 28, 2014], 3.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

readiness of ANSF units. Specifically, the act requires the DoD to “report on the number of ANSF units that are capable of conducting operations independently, units that are capable of conducting operations with U.S. and ISAF support, and units that are not ready to conduct operations.”¹¹¹ The assessments also provide updates on the status of these units as U.S. and NATO forces continue to hand over more security responsibility to the ANSF.¹¹²

Figure 36: History of ANSF Rating Definition Levels, 2010 to Present

History of ANSF Assessment Rating Definition Levels, 2010 to Present					
CUAT					RASR
April 2010	July 2010	September 2010	October 2010	August 2011	July 2013
Effective with Advisors	Independent	Independent	Independent	Independent with Advisors	Fully Capable
Effective with Assistance	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Capable
Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Partners	Partially Capable
Barely Effective	Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Developing	Developing with Partners	Developing
Ineffective	Ineffective	Ineffective	Established	Established	Established
Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed

Source: SIGAR, “Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts,” p.3, http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/Audits/SIGAR_14-33-AR.pdf.

Since August 15, 2013, ISAF has used the Regional Command ANSF Assessment Report (RASR) to rate the Afghan National Security Forces.¹¹³ This is the third different assessment tool used by the United States and ISAF to rate the ANSF. The RASR uses

¹¹¹ SIGAR, “Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts,” http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/Audits/SIGAR_14-33-AR.pdf. [accessed April 16-February 2014], 3.

¹¹² Ibid., 3.

¹¹³ Ibid., 3.

six color-coded rating definitions-(1) fully capable, (2) capable, (3) partially capable, (4) developing, (5) established, and (6) not assessed to evaluate ANSF units at the brigade and regional levels each month.¹¹⁴ In addition, “the RASR focuses on assessing specific components of the units, such as infantry and communications, against one overall and five targeted categories: combined arms, command and control, leadership, sustainment, and training.”¹¹⁵

The Afghan National Security Forces “as a whole are increasingly capable and proactive in conducting security operations and ANSF commanders are improving their integration of combined arms.”¹¹⁶ ANSF units are currently leading 95 percent of conventional and 98 percent of special operations missions.¹¹⁷ Fifty-seven of 85 ANA *kandaks* are rated as “capable” or higher.¹¹⁸ Two major strengths of the ANA are infantry maneuver and small unit execution of operations (at the *kandak*-level and below) and human intelligence (HUMINT) collection.¹¹⁹

For the ANA, the latest RASR report provides assessments of 24 brigades (22 corps brigades and 2 brigades of the 11th Capital Division).¹²⁰ Of those brigades, 88% were “fully capable” or “capable” of planning and conducting joint and combined arms operations.¹²¹ According to Figure 37, equipment readiness within the ANA Ground Forces Command (GFC) continues to improve. Attrition, however, “continues to pose a serious challenge to the ANA as 71% of brigades are still considered “developing” which

¹¹⁴ Department of Defense, “Report on Progress Toward Stability in Afghanistan, November 2013, 44.

¹¹⁵ SIGAR, “Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts,” http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/Audits/SIGAR_14-33-AR.pdf. [accessed April 16-February 2014], 3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 86.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 86.

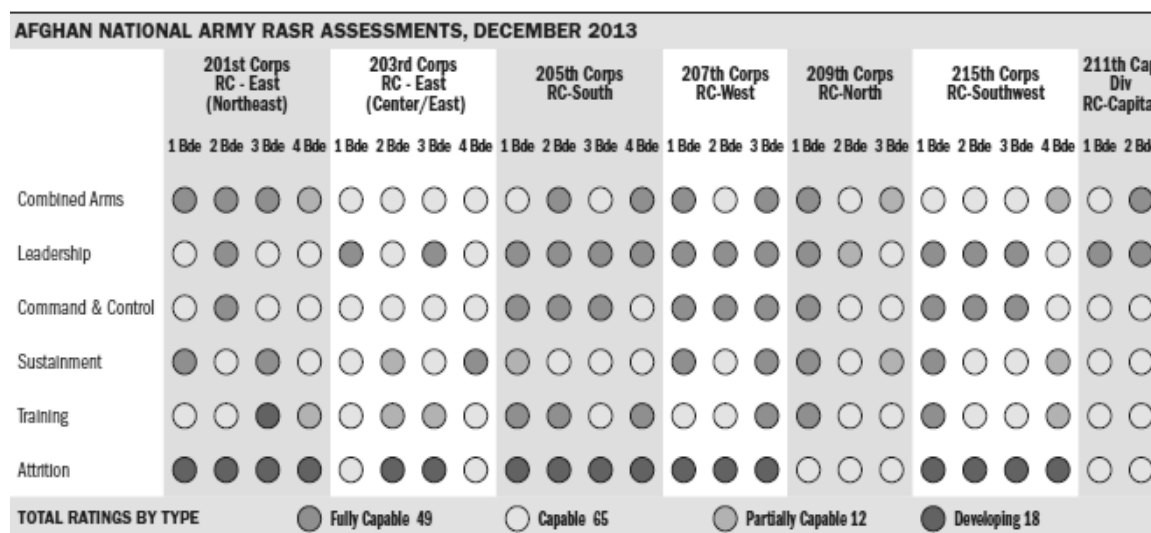
¹¹⁹ Ibid., 86.

¹²⁰ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghanistan National Army (ANA),” 1.

¹²¹ SIGAR, “Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans,” 87.

means that attrition in these brigades is 3% or more per month.”¹²² In other areas, most ANA brigades were rated “fully capable” or “capable,” including leadership (96%), command and control (100%), sustainment (88%), and training (83%).¹²³

Figure 37: ANA RASR Assessments, December 2013



For the Afghan National Police, the latest RASR report provides assessments of 16 of 21 regional ANP components—the Afghan Border Police, Afghan Uniform Police, and Afghan National Civil Order Police in seven different zones. Of the 16 components assessed, 94 percent were “fully capable” or “capable” of making arrests and prosecuting those arrested.¹²⁴ According to Figure 38, “readiness within the ANP continues to be a point of concern and the ANP also struggles with maintaining a manageable level of equipment readiness.”¹²⁵ In addition, attrition continues to be a challenge for the ANP as “50% of regional components are still considered “developing” which means that

¹²² Ibid., 87.

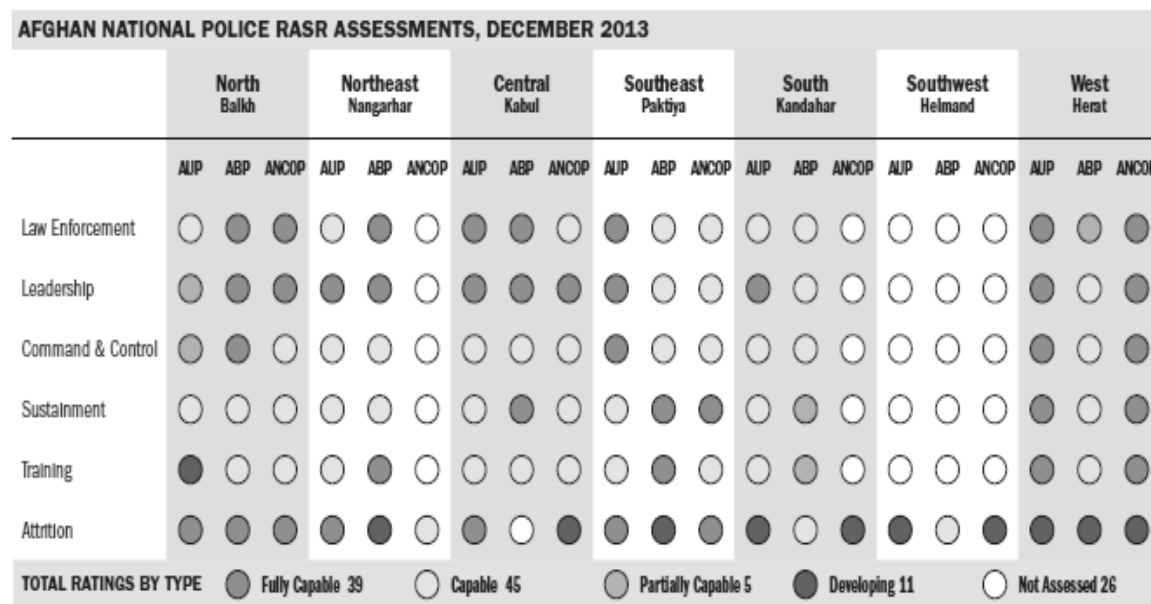
¹²³ Ibid., 87.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 87.

monthly attrition in these units is 2% or more.”¹²⁶ In other areas, the ANP regional components are mostly “fully capable” or “capable”: leadership (94%), command and control (94%), sustainment (94%), and training (88%).¹²⁷

Figure 38: ANP RASR Assessments, December 2013



Notes: AUP = Afghan Uniform Police; ABP = Afghan Border Police; ANCOP = Afghan National Civil Order Police

Source: IJC, Regional ANSF Status Report, December 2013.

Source: SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” p. 88, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014Jan30QR.pdf>

Green-on-Blue Attacks: The ‘Last Gasp’ of the Taliban?

One of the biggest threats to U.S. and ISAF soldiers in recent years have been attacks on Coalition forces by Afghan forces—the so-called green-on-blue attacks.¹²⁸ These attacks from within have increased dramatically over the past three years, and in 2012 they accounted for 15% of Coalition deaths.¹²⁹ Insurgents’ use of insider attacks as a tactic remains a risk to trust between U.S., ISAF, and ANSF forces. In particular,

¹²⁶ Ibid., 88.

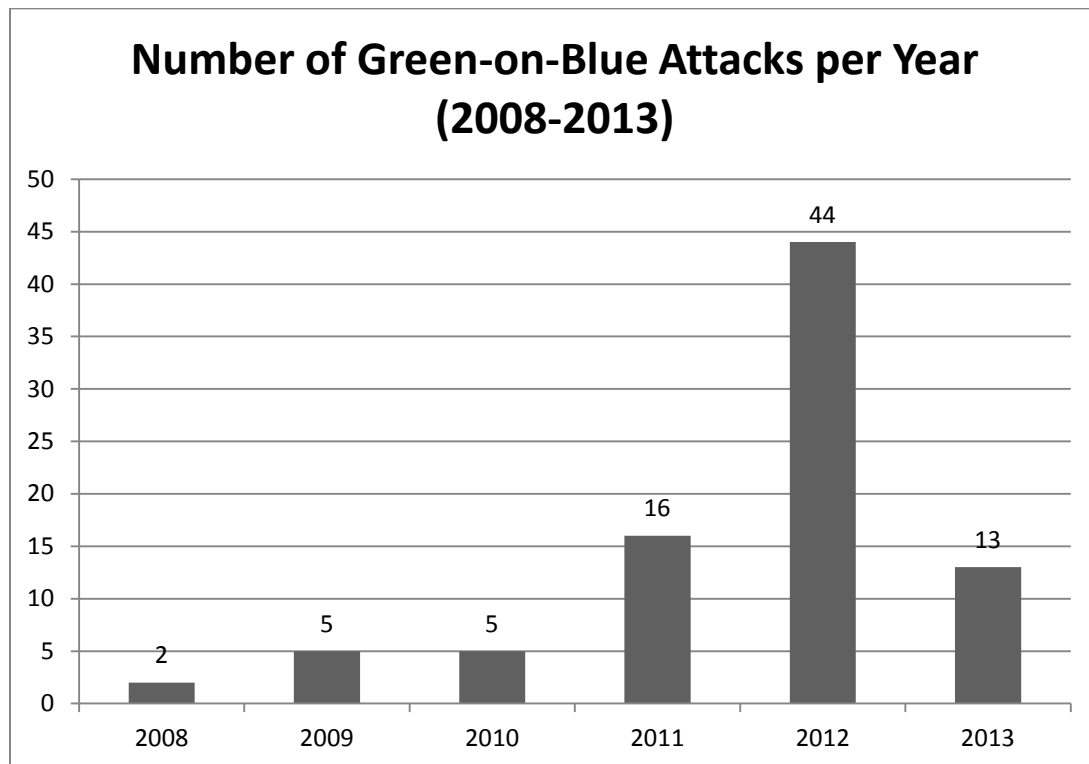
¹²⁷ Ibid., 88.

¹²⁸ Bill Roggio, “Green-on-Blue Attacks in Afghanistan,” 1.

¹²⁹ Bill Roggio & Lisa Lundquist, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/green-on-blue_attack.php [accessed April 14-August 23, 2012], 1.

“insider attacks risk undermining international support for the mission and long-term support for the Afghan government, which could pose a threat to the transition process and stability beyond 2014.”¹³⁰

Figure 39: Number of Green-on-Blue Attacks per Year (2008-2013)



Source: *The Long War Journal*, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” p.2, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/green-on-blue_attack.php p.2

From 2007 to 2013, there have been 86 documented green-on-blue attacks.¹³¹

“Even though it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the principal causes of these attacks given the small total number of incidents, there are discernible trends.”¹³²

Based on information available from *The Long War Journal* and the Department of Defense’s *Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* reports, insider attacks have increased in frequency over the past few years before decreasing in 2013. “Although

¹³⁰ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghanistan: Green-on-Blue Attacks in Context,” <http://www.understandingwar.org/green-on-blue/> [accessed April 14-October 31, 2012], 2.

¹³¹ Ibid., 2.

¹³² Ibid., 1.

U.S. and NATO commanders have stated that an estimated 90% of the attacks are due to cultural differences and personal enmity, the attacks began to spike in 2011, just after President Barack Obama announced his plan to pull U.S. forces out of Afghanistan and end combat operations in 2014, transferring security to the Afghan forces.”¹³³ The Taliban also have claimed to have stepped up efforts at infiltrating the Afghan National Security Forces.¹³⁴

Based on information from the *Long War Journal*, there were 2 insider attacks in 2008, 5 in 2009 and 2010 each, 16 in 2011, and 44 in 2012.¹³⁵ The number of insider attacks decreased by more than half in 2013 with only 13 attacks recorded that year. Green-on-blue attacks were largely concentrated in the Southern, Southwestern, and Eastern regional commands.¹³⁶ More than half of all attacks in 2012 occurred in Kandahar and Helmand, which were the focus of the counterinsurgency campaign during the “Surge.”¹³⁷

There are “two main narratives purporting to explain why green-on-blue attacks happen and why they are happening more frequently: grievances and infiltration.”¹³⁸ Grievance-based insider attacks occur because of cultural misunderstandings between foreign and Afghan troops, low morale, and revenge for perceived insults or provocations.¹³⁹ Attacks caused by insurgent initiative are pre-planned violence organized by members of the Taliban who have infiltrated the ANSF or influenced

¹³³ Sajjan Gohel, “Afghanistan: Green-on-blue attacks show there’s no easy way out,” <http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/18/opinion/opinion-afghanistan-green-on-blue/> [accessed April 14-September 18, 2012], 2.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³⁵ Bill Roggio & Lisa Lundquist, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” 2.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³⁷ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghanistan: Green-on-Blue Attacks in Context,” 1.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³⁹ Department of Defense, “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” http://www.defense.gov/pubs/October_1230_Report_Master_Nov7.pdf [accessed April 15-November 2013], 24.

existing members to execute attacks.

The DoD believes that the vast majority of attacks are grievance-based rather than a result of infiltration.”¹⁴⁰ In August 2012, ISAF Commander, General John Allen, said “that approximately 25% of the green-on-blue attacks were due to Taliban infiltration and/or coercion of Afghan forces.”¹⁴¹ In contrast, on October 4, 2012, Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Jawed Ludin described “the majority of insider attacks as the result of “terrorist infiltration” rather than cultural differences.”¹⁴² Another theory cites the rise in attacks in 2012 as a result of copycat behavior.¹⁴³ Meanwhile, the Taliban claims credit for nearly every attack¹⁴⁴.

The U.S. military “became so concerned with green-on-blue attacks in the summer of 2012 that it ordered units to designate “guardian angels” in each unit whose job is to provide security for troops working with Afghans.”¹⁴⁵ In mid-August of that year, field commanders were told they could increase the number of “guardian angels” depending on the tactical situation.¹⁴⁶ The surge in insider attacks also prompted U.S. and ISAF forces to expand their counterintelligence capability in Afghanistan.¹⁴⁷ In addition, “General Allen issued a directive to all U.S. and NATO troops on August 17, 2012 to carry a loaded weapon at all times.”¹⁴⁸ Announcing these changes, General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that Afghan forces were also trying

¹⁴⁰ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghanistan: Green-on-Blue Attacks in Context,” 1.

¹⁴¹ Thom Shanker, “General Notes Taliban Coercion in Some Attacks on Troops,” *New York Times*, Aug 23, 2012.

¹⁴² Jamie Crawford, “Afghan Government: Insider Attacks are Terrorism,” [accessed April 14-October 4, 2012], 1.

¹⁴³ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghanistan: Green-on-Blue Attacks in Context,” 1.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴⁶ John Reed, “Guardian Angels in Afghanistan,” http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/08/14/pentagon_looks_to_guardian_angels_in_afghanistan [accessed April 14-August 14, 2012], 1.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴⁸ Justin Fishel, “Coalition Troops now Armed at all Times on Afghan Bases in Wake of ‘Insider’ Shootings,” <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/08/17> [accessed April 14-August 17, 2012], 1.

to address the problem and had already discharged "hundreds of soldiers" suspected of having been radicalized.¹⁴⁹

In tabulating the green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan, this study utilizes information gathered from *The Long War Journal*. For the purposes of this report, all attacks in Afghanistan in which a person purporting to be affiliated with the Afghan National Security Forces—whether, ANA, ALP, ABP, AUP, AAF, other branches, or security personnel hired by Afghan authorities—are considered “green.”¹⁵⁰ Similarly, all persons purporting to be affiliated with U.S., ISAF, or NATO security forces, including interpreters and civilian contractors, are considered “blue.”¹⁵¹ The data below indicates the number of attacks, the affiliation of the attacker (if known), the location/province where the attack occurred, the date of the attack, the number of security forces killed or wounded in the attack, and the affiliation of those killed or wounded.¹⁵² The data also includes the reported fate of the attacker(s).

Because ISAF has generally not reported on green-on-blue incidents in which no casualties have occurred, “the overall number of attacks is likely to be far greater than those reported below.”¹⁵³ Similarly, ISAF has generally not reported on incidents that have resulted only in injuries, not death; these too are likely to be underreported.¹⁵⁴ ISAF has told *The Long War Journal* and other news and media outlets that the overall number of green-on-blue attacks is “classified.”

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵¹ Lisa Lundquist, “Senior ISAF Member Killed in Green-on-Blue Attack in Southern Afghanistan,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/10/3rd_green-on_blue_at.php?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=senior-isaf-member-killed-in-green-on-blue-attack-in-southern-Afghanistan [accessed April 14-October 5, 2013], 1.

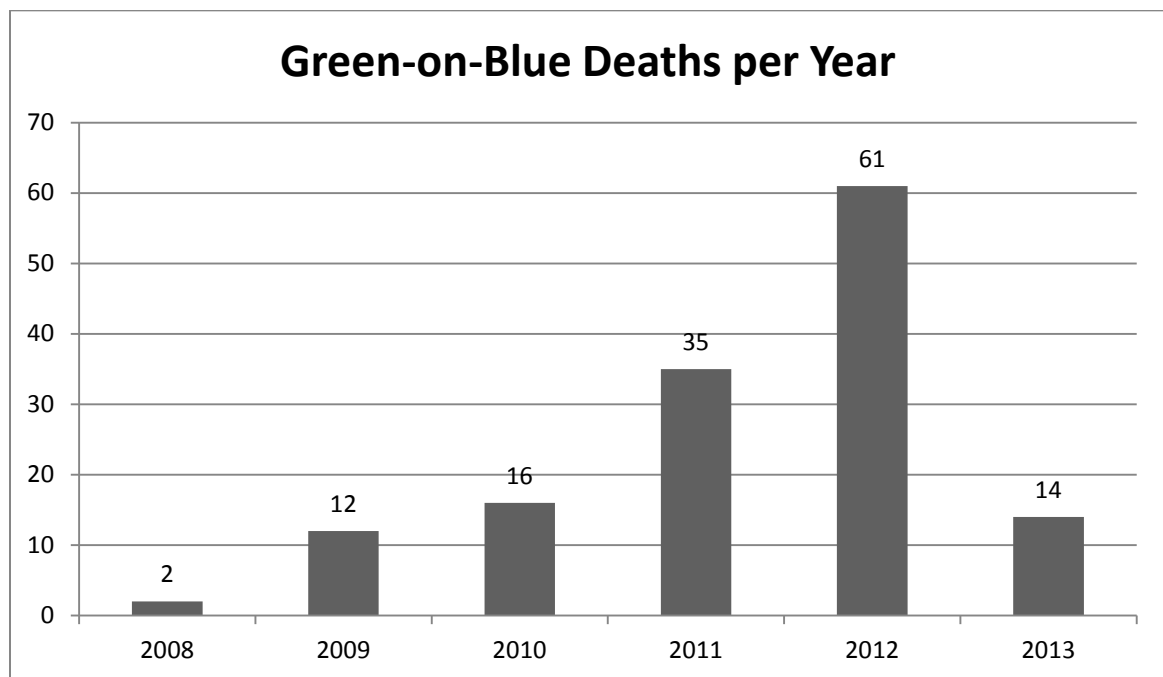
¹⁵² Bill Roggio & Lisa Lundquist, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” 1.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵⁴ Bill Roggio & Lisa Lundquist, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/green-on-blue_attack.php [accessed April 14-August 23, 2012], 1.

According to data gathered by *The Long War Journal*, more than 143 U.S. and ISAF soldiers have been killed in green-on-blue attacks between 2008 and 2013. In 2008, only two ISAF soldiers were killed by insider attacks, 12 in 2009 and 16 in 2010.¹⁵⁵ The number of soldiers killed by green-on-blue incidents almost doubled in 2011 (35) before reaching a record high of 61 fatalities in 2012. Green-on-blue deaths accounted for 15% of all Coalition fatalities in 2012. Due to new measures put in place by ISAF and the ANSF, the number of U.S. and NATO troops killed by Afghan forces (14) dropped by more than 23% in 2013.¹⁵⁶

Figure 40: Green-on-Blue Deaths per Year



Source: *The Long War Journal*, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” p.2, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/green-on-blue_attack.php

Upon a closer look, a majority of these deaths occurred in the southern, southwestern, and eastern parts of Afghanistan. As shown in Figure 41, the province with the highest number of green-on-blue deaths is Helmand province with 34 fatalities. The

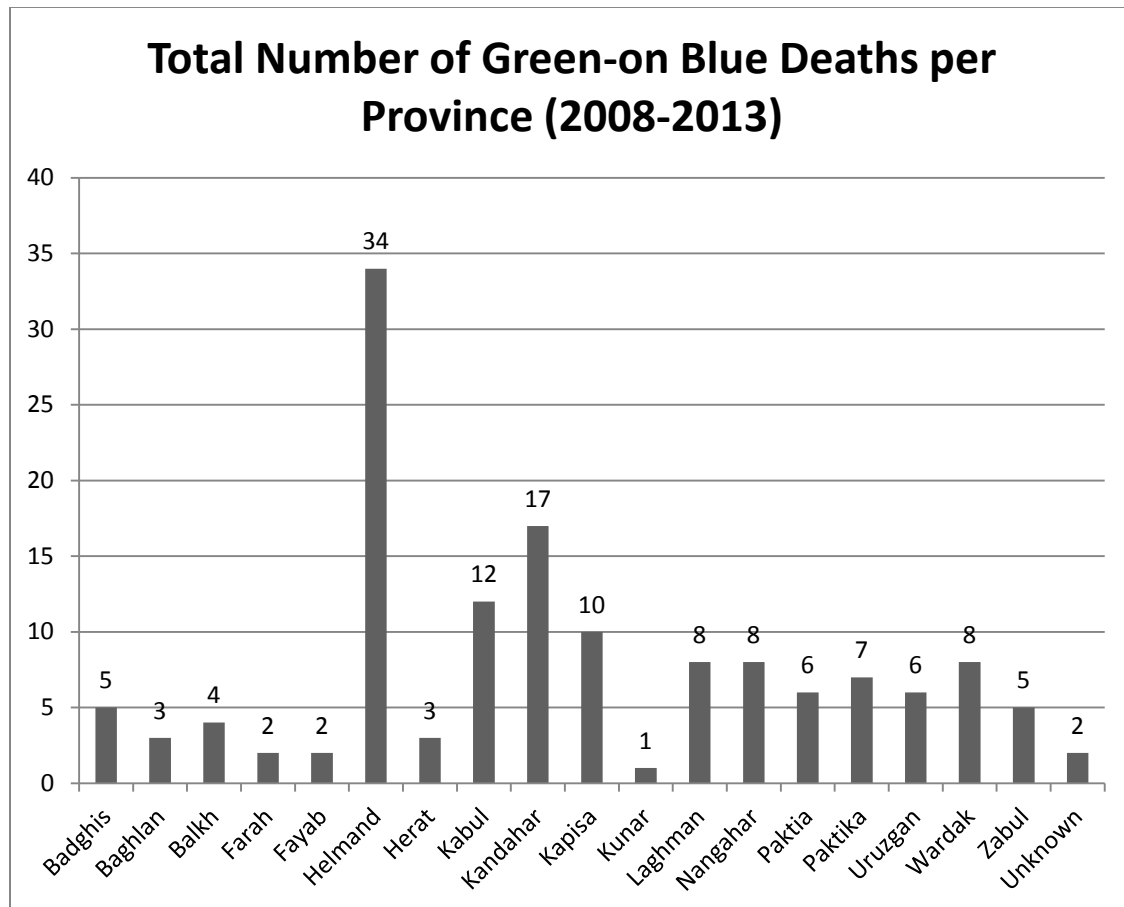
¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁶ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghanistan: Green-on-Blue Attacks in Context,” 2.

next closest province is Kandahar with 17 reported fatalities. These two provinces alone accounted for 26% of the 143 reported green-on-blue fatalities between 2008 and 2013.

Interestingly enough, the province with the third highest number of insider attack fatalities is Kabul, which is supposed to be one the most secure provinces.

Figure 41: Total Number of Green-on-Blue Deaths per Province (2008-2013)

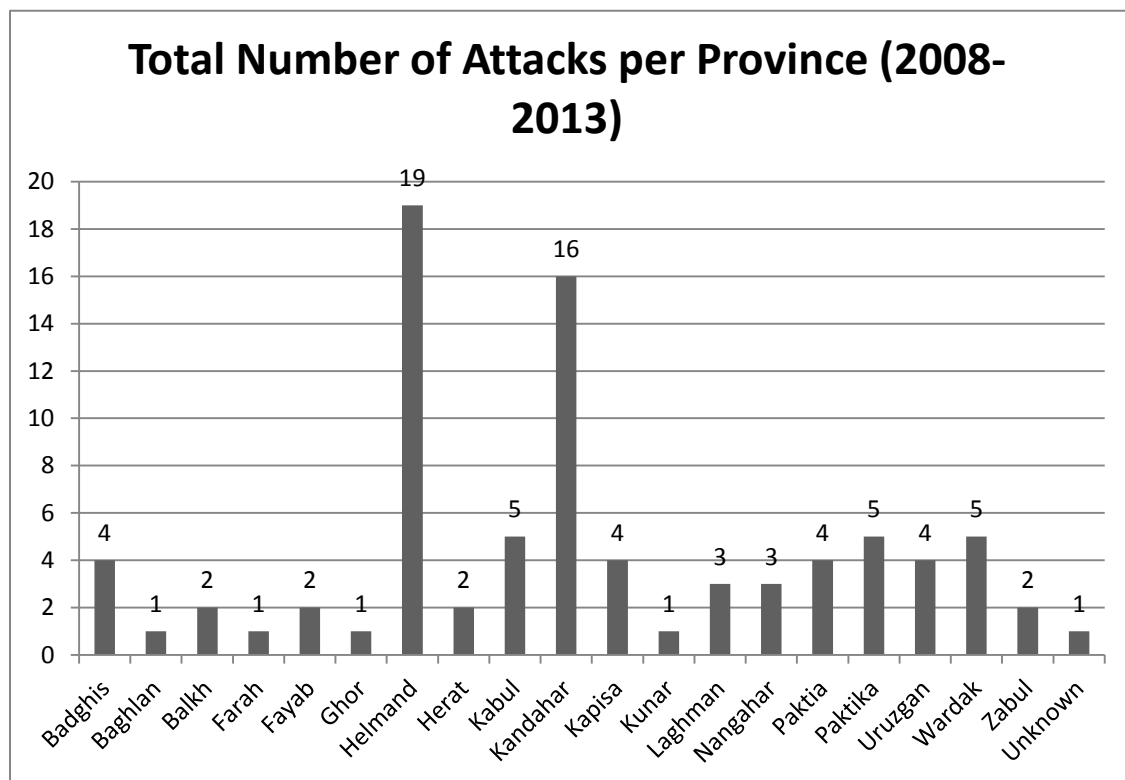


Source: *The Long War Journal*, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” p.2, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/green-on-blue_attack.php.

A final analysis also shows that a majority of green-on-blue attacks have taken place in Helmand and Kandahar provinces. More than 37% of all insider attacks between 2008 and 2013 have taken place in these two provinces. The province with the next highest number of attacks is Kabul with 12. Rounding up the top five is Kapisa province with 10 casualties and Nangarhar, Laghman, Wardak provinces tied with eight.

In conclusion, the mitigation measures adopted by U.S., ISAF, and ANSF forces since the surge in attacks during the summer of 2012 appear to be making a difference, and to date, the rate of attacks against ISAF forces is significantly reduced.¹⁵⁷ That said, “these mitigation measures continue to diminish U.S. and NATO resources and hamper, movement, speed, and activity on the tactical level.”¹⁵⁸ Attacks against the ANSF continue to rise, however, and may continue to do as the ANSF assume greater responsibility for the security of Afghanistan.¹⁵⁹

Figure 42: Total Number of Attacks per Province (2008-2013)



Source: *The Long War Journal*, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” p.2, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/green-on-blue_attack.php

¹⁵⁷ Department of Defense, “Report on Progress Toward Security,” 26.

¹⁵⁸ Institute for the Study of War, “Afghanistan: Green-on-Blue Attacks in Context,” 3.

¹⁵⁹ Bill Roggio & Lisa Lundquist, “Green-on-blue attacks in Afghanistan: the data,” 4.

CHAPTER VIII: A FLIP OF THE COIN: COUNTERINSURGENCY'S LEGACY IN AFGHANISTAN

"Any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should have his head examined."

-Robert Gates

On September 20th, 2012, the last of the 30,000 surge troops sent to Afghanistan two years before were withdrawn. During this time, the "Taliban were pushed out of large stretches of southern Afghanistan, the influx of U.S. resources accelerated the development of the Afghan security forces, and the billions that were poured into the country in the name of reconstruction did provide short-term employment to thousands of young men."¹ The surge and its accompanying COIN strategy "also exacted a significant cost on the United States and its NATO and Afghan allies – in lives, limbs, and dollars."²

Despite the remarkable progress made by U.S. and ISAF forces in southern Afghanistan, eastern parts of the country are still in the grip of the Haqqani Network, a "Taliban faction that Admiral Mike Mullen has called a 'veritable arm' of the Taliban."³ The Taliban have also made gains in parts of the country previously unaffected by the insurgency including northern and western Afghanistan.⁴ Moreover, the Taliban seems to "possess a remarkable capability to regenerate its command structure in Afghanistan despite years of night raids and other operations against the group's senior, mid, and

¹ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "The Afghan Surge is Over," http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/25/the_afghan_surge_is_over [accessed April 24-September 25, 2012], 1.

² Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan*, (New York: Knopf, 2012), 326.

³ Karen DeYoung, "Pakistan backed attacks on American targets, U.S. says," *The Washington Post*, September 22, 2012.

⁴ Dion Nissenbaum & Habib Khan Totakhil, "Taliban Bombing Campaign Hits Afghan North," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 2011.

lower-level leadership cadre.”¹ In addition, “the top leadership cadre of the Quetta Shura and the leaders of the four regional military commands, most of whom are based in Pakistan, remain virtually untouched in these raids.”² Thus, the question remains as to whether or not the United States’ COIN and accompanying surge strategy was successful in achieving the four main objectives identified by *Field Manual 3-24* needed to win in Afghanistan? And were the gains worth the cost? Let’s examine them one by one:

1. Securing Afghanistan’s Population and Borders

Initially, then-ISAF commander General Stanley McChrystal had proposed a plan that addressed southern and eastern Afghanistan simultaneously. A counterinsurgency strategy was to be implemented in both areas. This would have required adding more than 40,000 U.S. troops to the 70,000 already in Afghanistan.³ This plan was not adopted, however. Instead, President Obama only approved an additional 30,000 troops. Because fewer troops meant that a COIN strategy could not be implemented in the southern and eastern parts of the country simultaneously, “the original 2009 plan was modified into a two-phase plan.”⁴ In Phase 1, the South would be addressed, and in Phase 2, the U.S. and ISAF would shift its efforts to the East.

On June 23, 2011, Obama announced that the withdrawal of U.S. troops would begin sooner than the counterinsurgency strategy devised by General McChrystal and General Petraeus had envisioned. Originally planned to start in 2014, the drawdown of U.S. and ISAF forces began in the summer of 2011, as the entire surge force was

¹ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/09/> [accessed March 17-September 6, 2012], 1.

² Ibid. 1.

³ CJ Radin, “Analysis: U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan shifts as forces draw down,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/the_military_strateg_1.php [accessed January 17 – August 3, 2011], 2.

⁴ John R. Ballard, David W. Lamm, & John K. Wood. *From Kabul to Baghdad and Back: The U.S. at War in Afghanistan and Iraq*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 231.

withdrawn by September 2012.⁵ This revised timeline had major implications for the original counterinsurgency plan. Although most of Helmand and Kandahar provinces had been secured by U.S. and ISAF forces by the summer of 2011, “the early troop withdrawal made Phase 2 of the counterinsurgency strategy no longer viable.”⁶

By August 2011, most of the units that were to be transferred to eastern Afghanistan once Helmand and Kandahar provinces had been cleared were withdrawn. Thus, the United States and ISAF were unable to carry out a full-scale counterinsurgency strategy in eastern Afghanistan.⁷ Instead of clearing population centers, “Coalition forces focused on conducting counterterrorism operations that would degrade the capabilities and infrastructure of the Haqqani Network.”⁸ Despite sustaining heavy losses, the Haqqani Network has been able to infiltrate the neighboring province of Ghazni as well as Zabul, Logar, and Wardak provinces.⁹ The Haqqani Network has also maintained the ability to carry out high profile attacks and operations throughout central and eastern Afghanistan, especially in the capital city of Kabul.¹⁰

As seen from above, the original counterinsurgency strategy devised by Generals David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal and Admiral Mike Mullen was never fully implemented by the Obama administration. Instead of pursuing a strategy that simultaneously focused on southern and eastern Afghanistan, the United States was only able to carry out the first phase of the strategy as President Obama began the withdrawing of troops much earlier than anticipated. “This had an adverse effect on the United States’

⁵ CJ Radin, “U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan: the plan for 2012, 2013, and 2014,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/03/us_withdrawal_from_a.php [accessed April 22-March 18, 2012], 2.

⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁹ Ibid., 1.

¹⁰ Dion Nissenbaum & Habib Khan Totakhil, “Taliban Bombing Campaign Hits Afghan North, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 2011.

counterinsurgency strategy as the U.S. was no longer able to conduct counterinsurgency operations in the eastern part of Afghanistan.”¹¹ Clearing operations in Helmand and Kandahar provinces came to a quicker end as well as the U.S. began withdrawing troops during the summer of 2011 instead of by the end of that year. The transfer of responsibility for security for some of these areas to ANSF also began four months earlier than originally planned.¹²

Even if the Obama administration would have stuck to the original timeline adopted in 2009, the United States’ counterinsurgency strategy failed to meet the troop density levels that are recommended by *FM 3-24* to secure the population. Troop density levels before the surge translated into some of the lowest troop and police density levels in any COIN/stabilization operation since the end of World War II.¹³ These force levels rank with some of the international community’s most notable failures: the UN mission of Belgian Congo (1.3 per thousand); the American and UN intervention in Somalia (5.7); the U.S. rescue of Haiti (2.9); the French operation in Cote d’Ivoire (0.2); and the U.S. war in Iraq in 2005 (5.3).¹⁴

When compared to the 22 other cases listed in this study, force levels during the surge (2010-2012) rank with some of the highest levels reached by U.S. and international forces in Kosovo (19.3); Iraq 2007 (18.85); Bosnia (17.3); and East Timor (9.8). These campaigns are considered to be some of the more successful counterinsurgency and nation-building operations carried out by the United States and international community

¹¹ CJ Radin, “Analysis: U.S. military Strategy in Afghanistan shifts as forces draw down,” http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/the_military_strategy_1.php. [accessed April 10-August 3, 2011], 1.

¹² CJ Radin, “U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan: the plan for 2012, 2013, and 2014,” 3.

¹³ James Dobbins, “America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq,” http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1753/MR1753.pref.pdf [accessed January 20 – February 2004], 7.

¹⁴ Ibid., 7.

in recent years.¹⁵ Despite reaching similar force levels, the U.S. and NATO were unable to generate the kind of success experienced by these other campaigns as violence continues to plague eastern Afghanistan and has spread to areas previously unaffected by the insurgency. Thus, “having enough forces to reverse increasing insurgent violence does not always equate to victory, or even the attainment of low levels of violence.”¹⁶ Other factors such as varying levels of training and equipping, as well as limitations on force employment imposed by Coalition governments can all have a positive or negative impact on the outcome of a COIN operation.¹⁷

Efforts to secure Afghanistan’s border with Pakistan, while gaining the Pakistani government’s support in cracking down on insurgent sanctuaries on its soil have not fared much better. Although Pakistan “has never been the lone player in Afghanistan’s proxy conflicts, it remains the most problematic one for the United States.”¹⁸ Pakistan has a long history of officially sponsored militancy.¹⁹ The reasons for this policy appear to be diverse.²⁰ According to Matt Waldman (2010), the Taliban-ISI relationship is founded on mutual benefit. “The Taliban need external sanctuary, as well as military and logistical support to sustain their insurgency, the ISI believes that it needs a significant allied force in Afghanistan to maintain regional strength and ‘strategic depth’ in their rivalry with India.”²¹

Since 2001, the “United States has provided the Afghan and Pakistani

¹⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁶ Steven M. Goode, “A Historical Basis for Force Requirements,” 56.

¹⁷ Ibid., 56.

¹⁸ Richard Armitage, “U.S. Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan,” www.cfr.org/pakistan/us-strategy-pakistan-Afghanistan/p23253 [accessed April 22-December 201], 18.

¹⁹ Ibid., 20.

²⁰ Ibid., 20.

²¹ Matt Waldman, “The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship Between Pakistan’s ISI and Afghan Insurgents,” <http://www.aljazeera.com/mritems/Documents/2010/6/13/20106138531279734lse-isi-taliban.pdf> [accessed February 25 – June 2010], 5.

governments and militaries with considerable money, equipment, training, and other security assistance.”²² The U.S. has also increased the number of cross-border raids by Special Operations Forces and drone strikes carried out in Pakistan’s tribal areas since President Obama came into office. Between 2009 and 2013, American Predator and Reaper drones have carried out more than 308 airstrikes against Taliban, al Qaeda, and other militant targets in Pakistan.²³ These strikes have taken a significant toll on al Qaeda’s leadership cadre and diminished the operational capabilities of allied groups such as the Pakistani Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Despite the success the United States has had in targeting and killing high-level members of the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other affiliated militant groups, the drone program remains highly controversial.²⁴

In December 2013, the Obama administration put a halt on further drone strikes against militant and terrorist targets in Pakistan. Some administration officials now believe the drone campaign may be counterproductive to U.S. national security interests.²⁵ Counterterrorism experts “argue that because of the decentralized structure of terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda and the Taliban, targeting their top leaders is ineffective. Thus, killing terrorist leaders is difficult, it is often ineffective and it can easily backfire.”²⁶

According to Daniel Byman, “even when targeted killings do work to eliminate

²² Richard Weitz, “Afghan-Pakistan Border Rules,” 4.

²³ Bill Roggio, “The Covert U.S. Air Campaign in Pakistan,” 2.

²⁴ Gregor Peter Schmitz, “Are Drones Worth Their Drawbacks?” *Der Spiegel*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-debate-on-push-button-war-are-drones-worth-their-drawbacks-a-682645.html> [accessed February 14 – March 12, 2010], 1.

²⁵ David Wood, “Drone War Expansion Sparks Questions about Effectiveness, Oversight in Obama’s Second Term,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/16/drone-war-obama_n_2454901.html. [accessed April 14-January 16, 2013], 1.

²⁶ Sara Birkenthal, “U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis,” [http://www.cmc.edu/keck/student/Birkenthal %20Fellowship%20Paper.pdf](http://www.cmc.edu/keck/student/Birkenthal%20Fellowship%20Paper.pdf) [accessed February 11 - December 2012], 22.

terrorist leaders, they are decidedly a ‘poor second to arrests’ because dead men are no help in informing the United States of broader terrorist activities.”²⁷ Finally, drone strikes are very unpopular in Pakistan and have put a deep strain on military ties between the U.S. and Pakistan.

In conclusion, U.S. attempts to curb the flow of foreign and insurgent fighters and weapons crossing the Afghan-Pakistani border have proven ineffective as the U.S. government has failed to convince the Pakistanis to crack down on these groups or put better measures and troops in place to secure its border with Afghanistan. This has done much harm to U.S. and ISAF counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, as Taliban insurgents and foreign fighters are able to move freely across the border as well as set up permanent bases in Pakistan to launch attacks against Coalition and Afghan forces in Afghanistan from. Even if the United States was able to convince the Pakistani government to take action against these groups, the Pakistani Army has shown it is not sufficiently equipped to fight the insurgency in these areas.²⁸

While it is true that Pakistan has increased its intelligence sharing with the U.S. in support of its drone program, “it does so only in support of those terrorists who challenge Islamabad’s authority.”²⁹ Moreover, “there is evidence of Pakistani complicity at some level of providing: training, funds, weapons, and shelter to members of the Taliban and other Afghan insurgents”³⁰ so that they are able to continue their fight against U.S., ISAF, and Afghan forces in Afghanistan. Even under the best of circumstances, U.S.

²⁷ Daniel Byman, “Do Target Killings Work?” *Foreign Affairs* (June 14, 2009), 95-111 seen in Sara Birkenthal, “U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis,” 22.

²⁸ Jayshree Bajoria, “The Troubled Afghan-Pakistani Border,” <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/troubled-afghan-pakistani-border/p14905> [accessed February 20 – March 20, 2009], 5.

²⁹ Anthony N. Celso, “Phase IV Operations in the War on Terror: Comparing Iraq and Afghanistan,” *Orbis* 54, no 2. (Spring 2010): 191.

³⁰ Matt Waldman, “The Sun in the Sky,” 17.

efforts to secure the Afghan-Pakistani border would still have remained a monumental task. However, until the U.S. with Pakistan's assistance, is able to stem al Qaeda's free-flow of weapons, money, and supplies into and out of Afghanistan, efforts to secure Afghanistan's population or border at any level will remain unsuccessful.

2. Winning the Hearts and Minds of the Afghan People by Increasing Security

Upon review, the United States' counterinsurgency and accompanying surge strategy made substantial progress in the southern parts of Afghanistan. Prior to the surge in 2010, the Taliban and its allies made startling gains, "showing an ability to control territory in Helmand and Kandahar provinces that they had previously lost."³¹ The surge reversed these gains as "U.S. and ISAF SOF forces conducted more than 7,100 counterterrorism missions between May 30th and December 2nd, 2010."³² During these operations, "more than 600 insurgent leaders were captured or killed."³³ In addition more than 2,000 enemy fighters were killed, and over 4,100 captured.³⁴

To gauge the overall impact of the United States' COIN strategy this study consulted several sources: monthly data compiled by NATO's International Security Assistance Force, data gathered by the DOD for its semiannual annual report to Congress (Report on Progress: Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan), and annual reports produced by the United Nations. These data, "measure in various ways, the ability of the Taliban-insurgency to carry out attacks throughout the whole country as well as U.S. and NATO efforts to improve security and protect the population."³⁵

One indicator used by this study to measure security progress made by U.S. and

³¹ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "The Afghan Surge is Over," 1

³² Joscelyn, Thomas & Bill Roggio. "Analysis: The Taliban's 'momentum' has not been broken," 3..

³³ Ibid., 1.

³⁴ Ibid., 1.

³⁵ Ibid., 1.

ISAF forces during the surge is the number of IED attacks that occurred between January 2010 and December 2012. Since 2006, “IEDs have become the Taliban’s favored weapon of choice and the biggest killer of Coalition soldiers and Afghan civilians.”³⁶ With the start of the surge in 2010, the number of IED events in Afghanistan increased to over 15,255 that year.³⁷ “This was a 62 percent increase over 2009 and more than three times as many as the year before.”³⁸

The number of IED events continued to rise in 2011, as more than 16,554 IEDs were detonated or cleared that year.³⁹ Beginning in 2012, the number of IED attacks began to drop in Afghanistan with February 2012 representing one of the best months since the beginning of the surge in 2010.⁴⁰ Overall, there were “15,222 incidents in 2012, an 8 percent decline from their record high in 2011.”⁴¹ Moreover, fewer U.S. troops (104) were killed by IEDs in 2012 than in 2011 (183), a 57% decline.⁴²

Even though the number of U.S. casualties caused by IEDs dropped by more than 8 percent in 2012, a decrease in fatalities may not always tell the full story.⁴³ According to Bill Roggio of *The Long War Journal*, “attacks were down overall nationwide in 2012 as “Afghan forces were pushed to the fore.”⁴⁴ While the number of U.S. casualties in Afghanistan dropped by more than 60% between 2012 and 2013, the number of Afghan

³⁶ Rob Evans, “Afghanistan war logs: How the IED became Taliban’s weapon of choice,” 1.

³⁷ DoD, “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” http://www.defense.gov/pubs/Section_1230_Report_July_2013.pdf [accessed March 18 – July 2013], 19.

³⁸ Gareth Porter, “How the U.S. Quietly Lost the IED War in Afghanistan,” <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/10/how-the-u-s-quietly-lost-the-ied-war-in-afghanistan/> [accessed March 17 – October 9, 2012], 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰ Rob Evans, “Afghanistan war logs: How the IED became Taliban’s weapon of choice,” 1

⁴¹ Tom Vanden Brook, “Coalition Death from IED Attacks Soar in Afghanistan,” http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/military/2009-03-08-IED_N.htm [accessed December 23-March 9, 2009], 1.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴³ Rowan Scarborough, U.S. troops winning war against IEDs of Taliban, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/may/24/us-troops-winning-war-against-ieds-of-taliban/?page=all> [accessed March 18-May 24, 2012], 1.

⁴⁴ Joscelyn, Thomas & Bill Roggio. “Analysis: The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 4.

troops killed in combat shot up almost 80%.⁴⁵ “This is likely in response to ANSF forces taking an increased role in combat operations as well as the ongoing decrease in the number international forces in the country.”⁴⁶ In 2013, 95% of all conventional operations were carried out by Afghan forces as well as 98% of all special operations missions.⁴⁷ Thus, casualties are not the best way to judge the strength or weakness of an insurgency.⁴⁸

Another indicator used by this study to track security trends during the surge was the number of civilians killed or injured. Surge advocates argued “that behind the protective shield of increasing numbers of ISAF and Afghan security forces, good government would emerge, the rule of law would take root and prosperity would grow.”⁴⁹ Yet, despite some of the strictest rules of engagement (ROEs) in the history of warfare the United States was unable to protect the population, much less win their support. In 2009, “more than 1,523 Afghan civilians were killed, this number increased to 2,790 in 2010 before reaching an all-time high of 3,131 in 2011.”⁵⁰ The number of civilians killed did decrease in 2012 (2,754), but these numbers are well above pre-surge levels.⁵¹ According to a report released by the United Nations in 2013, “81 percent of all civilian casualties in 2012 were caused by the Taliban and other insurgent groups.”⁵² The heavy use of IEDs by insurgents remained the biggest threat to civilians in 2012, “causing 2,531 civilian casualties with 868 civilians killed and 1,663 injured, in

⁴⁵ The Guardian.Com “Afghan Troop Deaths up almost 80% in 2013 Fighting Season says Pentagon,” <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/08/afghan-troop-casualties-up-almost-80-in-2013-fighting-season-says-pentagon> [accessed March 18 – November 8, 2013], 1.

⁴⁶ Rowan Scarborough, U.S. troops winning war against IEDs of Taliban, 1.

⁴⁷ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” 7.

⁴⁸ Joscelyn, Thomas & Bill Roggio. “Analysis: The Taliban’s ‘momentum’ has not been broken,” 4.

⁴⁹ Karl W. Eikenberry, “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan,” 5.

⁵⁰ UNAMA “2010` Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” 1.

⁵¹ Ibid., 1.

⁵² Ibid., 1.

782 separate incidents.”⁵³ This represented a three percent increase from 2011.⁵⁴

Moreover, IED incidents accounted for 38 percent of all civilian casualties in 2012. The number of Afghan civilians killed by Coalition forces did decrease during this time however. In 2012, the number of Afghan civilians killed by ISAF and Afghan forces declined by more than 39 percent.⁵⁵

As seen from these statistics, the United States and ISAF were able to cut down the number of Afghan civilians killed by Coalition and Afghan forces, but were unable to protect the population from the Taliban and other insurgent groups. Moreover, the number of Afghan civilians killed between 2010 and 2012 are well above levels before the surge. Thus, U.S. and ISAF efforts in trying to protect the population are largely mixed.

A final metric used by this study to gauge the overall impact of the United States’ counterinsurgency strategy was the number of enemy initiated attacks (EIAs) carried out between 2010 and 2012. During much of the period after 2009, “ISAF reporting – and a great deal of U.S. reporting as well – focused on the number EIA incidents carried out by Taliban and insurgent fighters each month.”⁵⁶ ISAF and DoD reporting do indicate that “the number of enemy initiated attacks did drop between 2011 and 2012, but these reports also indicate EIAs did not drop meaningfully in 2012 and remain far higher than in 2009.”⁵⁷ This reporting also shows that the number of EIAs in Kandahar and Helmand provinces (the main focus of the surge) continued to remain high in 2012.

⁵³ Ibid., 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁶ Anthony H. Cordesman, “The War in Afghanistan at the End of 2012: The Uncertain Course of the War and Transition,” <https://csis.org/publication/war-afghanistan-end-2012-uncertain-course-war-and-transition> [accessed March 21 – January 22, 2013], 17.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 17.

In January 2013, the U.S. and ISAF discovered that a number of EIAs reported from independent ANSF operations had not been included in its database.⁵⁸ These EIAs occurred throughout 2012, although most occurred towards the end of the year.⁵⁹ “The ANSF had accurately reported this data, but ISAF mistakenly did not enter the data into its main EIA database.”⁶⁰ An internal audit resulted in a retroactive correction of 2012 EIA totals, from being down 7 percent compared to 2011 to no change.⁶¹

In conclusion, the United States and ISAF failed to develop a system of metrics that could be used to evaluate progress made by Coalition and ANSF forces during the surge. Moreover, some of these metrics have actually backfired. “Rather than showing progress made during the surge, metrics such as EIAs came to show negative trends during 2011-2012 and never showed the overall progress above the levels in 2009 when the surge in U.S. and NATO forces started.”⁶² Even though enemy initiated attacks are a “measurable combat activity as seen by a force under attack, they are largely irrelevant in counterinsurgency analysis.”⁶³

As pointed out by Anthony Cordesman, “EIA trends revert to the same kinetic focus on tactical victories in regular combat that characterized a great deal of U.S. and ISAF reporting before the insurgency reached a crisis level in 2009.”⁶⁴ Focusing on EIAs also ignores the fact that groups like the Taliban are fighting a political war against U.S. and other Coalition forces that have already largely eliminated their offensive combat

⁵⁸ Robert Burns, Taliban Attacks Drop Reported by ISAF was Incorrect,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/26/Taliban-attacks-drop_n_2767922.html [accessed March 21-February 26, 2013], 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁰ Ibid 1.

⁶¹ Anthony H. Cordesman, “The War in Afghanistan at the End of 2012: The Uncertain Course of the War and Transition,” 18.

⁶² Anthony Cordesman, “The Afghan War in 2013,” 2.

⁶³ Thomas Joscelyn & Bill Roggio, “Analysis: The Taliban’s ‘momentum has not been broken,’” 4.

⁶⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman, “The War in Afghanistan at the End of 2012: The Uncertain Course of the War and Transition,” 18

capabilities, but who will no longer be in the country at the end of 2014.⁶⁵ Thus, it is now clear that U.S. and ISAF public reporting and media coverage of the war have relied too heavily on EIA reporting as a “scoreboard” for progress.⁶⁶

3. Promoting a More Capable and Accountable Afghan Government

According to *FM 3-24*, good governance is normally a key requirement to achieve legitimacy for the Host Nation (HN) government.⁶⁷ *FM 3-24* defines “governance as the Host Nation government’s ability to gather and distribute resources while providing direction and control for the society.”⁶⁸ These include the regulation of public activity, taxation, maintenance of security, control and essential services, and normalizing the means of succession of power.⁶⁹ Governments “that attain these goals usually garner the support of enough of the population to create stability.”⁷⁰

Unfortunately, “the assumption that robust and well-designed foreign development assistance programs would, over time, yield effective governance and popular legitimacy proved to be a bad one in Afghanistan.”⁷¹ Since 2002, the United States has spent more than \$100 billion on promoting good governance and community development in Afghanistan.⁷² This is the most money the U.S. has ever spent to rebuild a country.⁷³ Despite these efforts, Afghanistan continues to rank as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. In 2008, Transparency International ranked Afghanistan

⁶⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-24. Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, (Washington: Department of Defense, 2006), 5-44.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 5-44.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 5-44.

⁷⁰ Elliot Cohen, Jan Horvath, and John Nagl, “Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency,” 49.

⁷¹ Frances Z. Brown, “Taking Stock of the Surge: From the Bottom Up,” 1.

⁷² Joel Brinkley, “Money Pit: The Monstrous Failure of U.S. Aid to Afghanistan,” <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/money-pit-monstrous-failure-us-aid-afghanistan> [accessed April 24-January/February 2013], 1.

⁷³ Ibid., 1.

176th out of 180 countries, only fourth from the worst case. Since then its ratings have continued to slip. Between 2010 and 2012, Afghanistan ranked 176th out of 180 in 2010, 180 out of 182 in 2011, and 174 out 176 in 2012.⁷⁴ In 2013, Afghanistan tied North Korea and Syria as the most corrupt country in the world.⁷⁵

The massive flux of foreign aid for development and other purposes has also promoted a “culture of entitlement” among Afghans.⁷⁶ Those whose jobs “are funded by foreign money have come to expect that the cash will continue to flow, and no doubt many of them would stop supporting the government and its foreign patrons, and perhaps even become insurgents, were the money and their jobs to disappear.”⁷⁷ According to UNODC’s 2012 survey on Afghan corruption, “power brokers in Kabul have sold governorships and police and judicial appointments, sometimes for hundreds and thousands of dollars, and used them to further their own private interests in the provinces.”⁷⁸ Moreover, ANA soldiers and Afghan policemen have been known to switch sides when the Taliban and other insurgent groups come bearing wads of cash.⁷⁹

The total cost of corruption has significantly increased over the past three years as well to \$3.9 billion.⁸⁰ In most cases, “bribes are paid to obtain better or faster services, while in others, bribes are offered to influence deliberations and actions such as police activities and judicial decisions, thereby eroding the rule of law and trust in institutions.”⁸¹ In 2012, half of Afghan citizens paid a bribe while requesting a public service and “nearly 30 percent of them paid a bribe for a private sector service, states the

⁷⁴ Paul D. Skinkman, “Corruption Plagues Afghanistan Ahead of U.S. Withdrawal.” 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁶ Octavian Manea, “COIN- A Culture of Entitlement?” 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁸ UNODC, “Cost of Corruption in Afghanistan nearly \$4 billion –the UN Survey,” 1.

⁷⁹ Octavian Manea, “COIN- A Culture of Entitlement?” 3.

⁸⁰ UNODC, “Cost of Corruption in Afghanistan nearly \$4 billion –the UN Survey,” 1.

⁸¹ Ibid., 2.

survey.”⁸² Moreover, the bribes that Afghan citizens paid in 2012 were more than double Afghanistan’s domestic revenue.⁸³

The development of Afghanistan’s judicial institutions continues to pose a significant challenge to U.S. and ISAF efforts to promote the Afghan government’s credibility and legitimacy among the Afghan people as well.⁸⁴ Over the last decade, there been several challenges to improving Afghanistan’s justice system.

“First, the central government’s inability to decrease the power of the warlords and exert control over the country impacted justice reform. Secondly, the central government’s inability and unwillingness to address widespread and deep-rooted corruption decreased the effectiveness of the justice system. Thirdly, many Afghans have little or no access to judicial institutions.”⁸⁵

Despite efforts by the international community and Afghan government, data from the World Bank suggest that Afghanistan’s rule of law continues to be one of the least effective—if not least effective—in the world.⁸⁶ In comparison to other countries in the region—such as Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—Afghanistan’s justice system was one of the least effective and ranked at the bottom.⁸⁷

The Afghan government also continues to collect an extremely low level of revenue (less than ten percent of GDP), and a large share of this comes from customs rather than taxation.⁸⁸ In effect, “Afghans are not really charged by their government for the services they are provided.”⁸⁹ Moreover, the Afghan government neither funds nor delivers the key public services offered in the country. According to estimates by the U.S.

⁸² Ibid., 2.

⁸³ Ibid., 2.

⁸⁴ Seth G. Jones, “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” 85..

⁸⁵ Ibid., 85..

⁸⁶ Kafummann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters V*, pp. 113-115 seen in Seth G. Jones, “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan,” 85.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁸⁸ Karl W. Eikenberry “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan.” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/136845> [accessed October 17 – September/October 2013], 5.

⁸⁹ Tom Pike & Eddie brown, “A Case Study of Corruption in Afghanistan,” 5.

Government Accountability Office, in recent years, the United States and other donors paid for about 90 percent of Afghanistan's total public expenditures.⁹⁰ In addition, "the provision of many key services remains highly dependent on foreign advisers and experts."⁹¹

Nonetheless, the Afghan government has made some progress in collecting revenue and maintaining a transparent budget.⁹² In 2012, the Open Budget Index gave Afghanistan a score of 59.⁹³ This score was the second greatest improvement in budget transparency over all countries in the world that year.⁹⁴ Compared to other countries in South Asia, Afghanistan received one of the highest scores from Open Budget Index in 2012.⁹⁵ Only India (68), received a higher score.⁹⁶

Finally, U.S. efforts "to promote local governance and community development have not generated the progress envisioned by surge advocates."⁹⁷ Since 2010, the United States has pumped billions into Afghanistan--- some \$30 billion during those three years alone.⁹⁸ According to Brian Glyn Williams, "the average aid going to Afghanistan per person was \$80, while postwar Bosnians, a far more advanced European people, received \$275."⁹⁹ Yet, Afghanistan "was the poorest country in Eurasia, with a life expectancy in the low 40s and one of the world's highest infant mortality rates."¹⁰⁰ Afghanistan also has the world's highest infant mortality rate; one hundred and twenty-two of every thousand

⁹⁰ Joel Brinkley, "Money Pit: the Monstrous Failure of U.S. Aid," 1.

⁹¹ Karl W. Eikenberry "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan," 5.

⁹² Open Budget Index, "Afghanistan 2012," 1.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁴ Ministry of Finance, Afghanistan, "Afghanistan Achieved Great Progress in Open Budget Index," <http://mof.gov.af/en/news/16855> [accessed April 7-January 27, 2013], 1.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁶ Open Budget Index, "Afghanistan 2012," 1.

⁹⁷ Frances Z. Brown, "The U.S. Surge and Afghan Local Governance, 5.

⁹⁸ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "The Afghan Surge is Over," http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/25/the_afghan_surge_is_over [accessed April 24-September 25, 2012], 3.

⁹⁹ Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified*, 198

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

children die before they reach age one.¹⁰¹ UNICEF also “reports that fifty-one percent of the nation’s children grow up stunted for lack of nutrition during the early years of life. That’s the world’s second-worst rate, behind Ethiopia.”¹⁰² Furthermore, Afghanistan still ranks near the bottom on per capita income, life expectancy, literacy, electricity usage, and on the World Bank’s broad Human Development Index.¹⁰³

Efforts to promote local governance and community have also been stymied by the Afghan national government.¹⁰⁴ The United States’ counterinsurgency strategy “deployed hundreds of civilians and uniformed personnel at the district level to encourage district governors to become more accountable to a broader spectrum of the population.”¹⁰⁵ These attempts were viewed with little enthusiasm by the Afghan National Government “as it threatened their heavily centralized patronage system to ensure that district-level administrators maintained allegiance to the capital.”¹⁰⁶

According to Stephen Biddle, “Hamid Karzai depends on the networks’ leadership to deliver political support; in exchange, he empowers them with critical appointments, protects them from prosecution, and allows them to prey on the public.”¹⁰⁷ The result is a government of informal political deal making rather than rule-based administration by publicly accountable institutions.¹⁰⁸ Thus, “efforts to increase local accountability as well as local governance are hindered by a lack of political will (or

¹⁰¹ Joel Brinkley, “Money Pit: the Monstrous Failure of U.S. Aid,” 1.

¹⁰² UNICEF, “Afghanistan: Children and Women in Crisis 2012,” <http://www.unicef.org/hac2012/hacafghanistan.php> [accessed April 24-June 2012], 3 seen in Joel Brinkley “Money Pit: the Monstrous Failure of U.S. Aid,” 1.

¹⁰³ Joel Brinkley, “Money Pit: The Monstrous Failure of U.S. Aid to Afghanistan,” 2.

¹⁰⁴ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “The Afghan Surge is Over,” 3.

¹⁰⁵ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Local Governance, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Frances Z. Brown, ““Bureaucracy Does Its Thing, Again,” <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2012/10/09/bureaucracy-does-its-thing-again/> [accessed April 8-October 9, 2012, 1], 8.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen Biddle, “Salvaging Governance Reform in Afghanistan,” <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/salvaging-governance-reform-afghanistan/p27778> [accessed April 8-April 2012], 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

abundance of political obstruction) on top.”¹⁰⁹

Finally, the COIN strategy devised by McChrystal and Petraeus rested upon the assumption “that the lack of governance was a universal driver of the insurgency, for which service delivery was the appropriate cure.”¹¹⁰ Though this analysis rang true in some parts of southern Afghanistan, “in other areas, particularly some remote parts of eastern Afghanistan, observers suggested that the presence of U.S., ISAF, ANSF forces became a fueling factor.”¹¹¹ Counterinsurgency has proved more difficult to apply in the sparsely-populated mountains of Kunar and Nuristan provinces where tribes view outsiders (even Afghans from different regions) with great skepticism.

4. Efforts to Train & Equip a Competent Afghan National Security Force

As the United States prepares to complete the withdrawal of its combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, the U.S. military and its Coalition partners are increasingly shifting security responsibilities to Afghan security forces. “The success of this security transition depends greatly on the strength and competence of the ANSF.”¹¹² As of January 17, 2014, the United States has spent \$59 billion funding the Afghan National Security Forces.¹¹³ Despite the progress made in training Afghanistan’s security forces, “the effectiveness, professionalism, and state of readiness of this security apparatus are uneven.”¹¹⁴

The Afghan National Security Forces as a whole are increasingly capable in

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁰ Frances Z. Brown, “The U.S. Surge and Local Governance,” 5.

¹¹¹ James Fussell, “Kunar and Nuristan: Rethinking U.S. Counterinsurgency Operations,” 3.

¹¹² Greg Bruno, “Afghanistan’s National Security Forces,” <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/afghanistans-national-security-forces/p19122> [accessed April 10-August 19, 2010], 1.

¹¹³ Jacob Siegel, “The Afghan Money pit: How Millions of Dollars Were Wasted,” <http://www.thedailybeast.com/the-hero-project/articles/2013/10/30/the-afghan-money-pit-how-millions-of-dollars-were-wasted.html> [accessed April 10-October 30, 2013], 3.

¹¹⁴ Greg Bruno, “Afghanistan’s National Security Forces,” <http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/afghanistans-national-security-forces/p19122> [accessed April 10-August 19, 2010], 1.

conducting security operations and ANSF commanders are improving their integration of combined arms.¹¹⁵ ANSF units are currently leading 95 percent of conventional and 98 percent of special operations missions. Fifty-seven of 85 ANA *kandaks* are rated as “capable” or higher.¹¹⁶ Two major strengths of the Afghan National Army are infantry maneuver and small unit execution of operations and human intelligence collection.¹¹⁷

According to the most recent Regional Command ASNF Assessment Report (RASR), 88% of the Afghan National Army’s 24 brigades are “fully capable” or “capable” of planning and conducting joint and combined arms operations.¹¹⁸ In other areas, most ANA brigades were rated “fully capable” or “capable,” including leadership (96%), command and control (100%), sustainment (88%), and training (83%).¹¹⁹ Attrition, however, continues to pose a serious challenge to the ANA as 71% of brigades are still considered “developing” which means that attrition in these brigades is 3% or more per month.¹²⁰

For the Afghan National Police, the latest RASR report provides assessments of 16 of 21 regional ANP components in seven different zones. Of the 16 components assessed, 94 percent were “fully capable” or “capable” of making arrests and prosecuting those arrested.¹²¹ Readiness within the ANP continues to be a point of concern and the ANP also struggles with maintaining a manageable level of equipment readiness.¹²² In addition, “attrition continues to be a challenge for the ANP as 50% of regional components are still considered ‘developing’ which means that monthly attrition in these

¹¹⁵ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” 85

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 85

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 86

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 86.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 86

¹²⁰ Ibid., 86

¹²¹ Ibid., 87.

¹²² Ibid., 87.

units is 2% or more.”¹²³ In other areas, the ANP regional components are mostly “fully capable” or “capable”: leadership (94%), command and control (94%), sustainment (94%), and training (88%).¹²⁴

Another big problem is illiteracy. In 2010, when Lieutenant General Caldwell IV took command of the NATO training mission, he noted that “overall literacy” among the Afghan military and police stood at about fourteen percent.¹²⁵ Between 2009 and 2014, the United States spent more than \$200 million on a program to teach Afghan soldiers how to read and write.¹²⁶ Before the implementation of the ANSF Literacy program in 2009, literacy standards for recruits “were virtually non-existent as recruits could literally be pulled off the street and made a police officer.”¹²⁷

Since 2009, a total of 220,530 ANSF recruits have passed Level 1 of Dari or Pashto literacy and numeracy training while 70,350 ANSF personnel have achieved Level Three, or functional literacy under the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization standard.¹²⁸ Despite these numbers, a report released by SIGAR in January 2014 concluded that the program appears to have had a limited impact on actual literacy levels within the ANSF.¹²⁹ According to the report, “the ANSF has a remarkably high attrition rate, between 30 and 50 percent a year. Thus, many of the soldiers who have been educated at U.S. taxpayer expense are no longer in the Afghan Army.”¹³⁰

The SIGAR report also identified several other flaws in the literacy program. The

¹²³ Ibid., 87.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹²⁵ William B. Caldwell & Nathan K. Finney, “Security, Capacity, and Literacy,” 23.

¹²⁶ Josh Rogin, “After \$200 million, Afghan Soldiers Still Can’t Read,” 1.

¹²⁷ Tom Vanden Brook, “Inspector General: Literacy lags among Afghan Troops,” *USA Today*, January 28, 2014.

¹²⁸ Josh Rogin, “After \$200 million, Afghan Soldiers Still Can’t Read,” 1.

¹²⁹ SIGAR, “Afghan National Security Forces: Despite Reported Success, Concerns Remain about Literacy Program Results, Contract Oversight, Transition, and Sustainment,” 1.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 3.

program did not track students after their courses to be able to follow up on their progress.¹³¹ Further, the program, which relied on private contractors to teach the courses, “did not specify what the curriculum should contain or monitor the majority of sites where classes were held.”¹³² This led to what the report called “poor implementation” by contractors.¹³³ The report also found that between July 2012 and February 2013, 45 percent of Afghan National Police sent to the field received no literacy instruction or training.¹³⁴

Since the release of this report, the United States has cut back on the number of sites where literacy courses are being taught in order to promote better oversight.¹³⁵ NATO has also worked with the Afghan government to implement new contracts for literacy training of the ANSF, with more stringent metrics to measure literacy performance and limiting contract scope to encourage better contractor performance.¹³⁶ According to recent reports, this new oversight has saved the United States \$19 million.¹³⁷ CSTC-A also said responsibility for literacy training of ANA personnel in the field will transition to the ANA between July 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014. Literacy training at ANA training centers will transition by December 2014.¹³⁸

Attrition continues to pose a serious challenge to the ANSF’s sustainability and operational capabilities as well. “The annual attrition rate for the Afghan National Army

¹³¹ Ibid., 3.

¹³² Mattie Quinn & R. Jeffrey Smith, “U.S. Literacy Program for Afghan Military Comes Up Short,” <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/01/29/14183/us-literacy-program-afghan-military-comes-short> [accessed April 14-January 20, 2014], 2.

¹³³ Ibid., 13.

¹³⁴ Josh Rogin, “After \$200 million, Afghan Soldiers Still Can’t Read,” 2.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹³⁷ Heath Druzin, “Watchdog: \$200 million literacy program misses mark in Afghanistan,” <http://www.stripes.com/news/watchdog-200-million-literacy-program-misses-mark-in-afghanistan-1.264431> [accessed April 14- January 28, 2014], 3.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 3.

in 2013 was 34.4 percent.”¹³⁹ Between January and November 2013, 38,916 ANA personnel left the service.¹⁴⁰ The ANA has also suffered serious losses from fighting.¹⁴¹ Between December 2011 and November 2013, the ANA had 2,055 personnel killed in action (KIA) and 10,484 wounded in action (WIA).¹⁴² These problems “have been compounded by poor leadership, inadequate living and working conditions, the lack of a good program for leave, and the effects of seasonal demands for harvesting and planting.”¹⁴³ The overall strength of the Afghan National Police continues to be affected by turnover and attrition as well. Since October 2013, the overall strength of the ANP has decreased by more than 3,191 police officers.¹⁴⁴

According to Olga Olikier, “significant Soviet funding went to train Afghan soldiers and police fighting anti-government forces”¹⁴⁵ during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The Soviets faced many of the same problems that U.S. and ISAF troops are currently dealing with as they “were unable to stem desertions in the military.”¹⁴⁶ Despite having sent over 105,000 soldiers to help end the insurgency, “the Soviet Union was forced to withdraw, and the Afghan military immediately began to dissolve.”¹⁴⁷

Finally, as U.S. and ISAF forces are beginning the final phases of their withdrawal from Afghanistan, they are turning more and more of their forward operating bases, outposts, and equipment over to Afghan Security Forces. But the SIGAR found

¹³⁹ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2014Jan30QR.pdf> [accessed April 15-January 30, 2014], 85.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 85.

¹⁴¹ Gautum Das, “The Afghan National Army in 2014,” 3.

¹⁴² SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” 93.

¹⁴³ Gautum Das, “The Afghan National Army in 2014,” 3.

¹⁴⁴ SIGAR, “Quarterly Report the United States Congress Revised, January 2014,” 98.

¹⁴⁵ Olga Olikier, “Building Afghanistan’s Security Forces in Wartime: The Soviet Experience,” http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2011/RAND_MG1078.pdf [accessed April 24-March 2011], 59.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 59.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 60.

that the ANSF do not have the capability to operate and maintain garrisons built for them. As a result, “billions of dollars of U.S. taxpayer money will be at risk of going to waste.”¹⁴⁸

Despite these negative reports, the ANSF has shown signs of becoming a competent fighting force. In the face of Taliban vows to break them, the Afghan Army demonstrated that it can fight well and win firefights on the battlefield in 2013.¹⁴⁹ According to Johnathan Schroden (2014), “the Taliban “tested the army in direct combat but increasingly shifted from head-on to indirect attacks because they could not overmatch the ANA.”¹⁵⁰ Even though ANA forces spent a large majority of its time manning checkpoints and conducting patrols, it also showed some ability to plan and carry out more sophisticated operations without help from U.S. and ISAF forces.¹⁵¹

One such operation was Operation Semorgh, a large-scale effort to clear rural areas used as staging areas for insurgent attacks on the capital city of Kabul.¹⁵² In addition, “Afghan Special Operations Forces have been widely commended by U.S. commanders for their competence in leading independent operations and specialized missions, including their roles in replacing U.S. forces in conducting night raids that have long triggered popular anger and strained U.S.-Afghan relations.”¹⁵³ Moreover, “casualties in Afghan SOF units are minimal, and they have only experienced one

¹⁴⁸ Joel Brinkley, “Money Pit: The Monstrous Failure of U.S. Aid to Afghanistan,” <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/money-pit-monstrous-failure-us-aid-afghanistan> [accessed April 24-January/February 2013], 6.

¹⁴⁹ Johnathan Schroden, “Can the Afghan Security Forces Stand Up to the Taliban?” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/can-the-afghan-security-forces-stand-up-to-the-taliban> [accessed April 24-March 13, 2014], 1.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵² Ibid., 1.

¹⁵³ Javid Ahmad, “Afghanistan’s Special Forces are a Bastion of Hope,” http://southasia.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/01/24/afghanistans_special_forces_are_a_bastion_of_hope [accessed April 24-January 24, 2013], 2.

‘insider attack,’ which adds to their credibility.”¹⁵⁴

Should current trends continue, “U.S. and NATO forces are likely to leave behind a grinding stalemate between the Afghan government and the Taliban.”¹⁵⁵ The ANSF can probably sustain this deadlock, “but only as long as the United States and international community continue to pay the multibillion dollar annual bills needed to keep fighting the Taliban.”¹⁵⁶ The war will thus become a contest in will between the U.S./international community and the Taliban.¹⁵⁷ However, the ANSF has shown signs of becoming a competent force capable of conducting security operations on their own.¹⁵⁸ Despite sustaining significant casualties in 2013, ANSF forces largely held their own as no major population centers fell to the Taliban or other insurgent groups.¹⁵⁹

As seen from this study, the United States was largely successful in achieving its primary objective of reversing the Taliban’s momentum. Despite this progress, eastern parts of the country are still in the grip of the Haqqani Network.¹⁶⁰ The Taliban have also made gains in parts of the country previously unaffected by the insurgency, including northern and western Afghanistan. Moreover, Afghanistan continues to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world as the Afghan Government struggles to rein in corruption and provided services to the Afghan people. Thus, the counterinsurgency strategy devised by Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus has had very mixed

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵⁵ Stephen Biddle, “Ending the War in Afghanistan: How to Avoid Failure on the Installment Plan,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139644/stephen-biddle/ending-the-war-in-afghanistan> [accessed April 24-September/October 2013], 1.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵⁸ Johnathan Schroden, “Can the Afghan Security Forces Stand Up to the Taliban?”

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.

¹⁶⁰ Dunford, Joseph F. “Commander ISAF’s Afghanistan Update: Summer 2013,” <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/isaf-news-list/commander-isaf-s-afghanistan-update-summer-2013.html> [accessed April 22-June 18, 2013].

success in achieving the four main objectives identified by *Field Manual 3-24* needed to win in Afghanistan.

In particular, this study found three reasons why the United States' COIN strategy failed to achieve the objectives identified by *FM 3-24* needed to win:

(1) The counterinsurgency strategy devised by Generals McChrystal and Petraeus was never fully implemented and this set the mission up for only partial success.

On June 23rd, 2011, President Obama announced that U.S. troops would begin withdrawing much sooner than the December 2009 counterinsurgency plan had envisioned. This had major implications on the United States' counterinsurgency strategy as U.S and ISAF commanders no longer had the time, resources, or troops needed to secure the rest of southern Afghanistan.¹⁶¹ In particular, Coalition forces had to end clearing operations in Helmand and Kandahar provinces during the summer of 2011 (only 18 months into the surge) instead of at the end of the year.¹⁶² Moreover, U.S. and NATO forces were unable to conduct counterinsurgency operations in eastern Afghanistan to clear population centers held by the Haqqani Network because they did not have enough troops.¹⁶³ Thus, the security gains made by the United States and NATO in southern Afghanistan were largely negated as Coalition forces did not have the troops or resources needed to secure population centers in other parts of the country, especially eastern Afghanistan.

In "Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary of War," former U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates writes that although President Obama ordered a surge of 30,000 additional troops

¹⁶¹ CJ Radin, "Analysis: U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan shifts as forces draw down," http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/the_military_strateg_1.php [accessed January 17 – August 3, 2011], 2.

¹⁶² Ibid., 2.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 2.

to stabilize Afghanistan, the president came to believe that the strategy would not work.¹⁶⁴ “As I sat there, I thought: the president does not trust his commander, cannot stand Karzai, does not believe in his own strategy and does not consider the war to be his.”¹⁶⁵ Gates also writes about a March 2011 White House meeting. “For him, it’s all about getting out.”¹⁶⁶ Even though President Obama cannot be fully blamed for the counterinsurgency strategy’s failure in Afghanistan, the timetable imposed in June 2011 made it impossible for U.S. and NATO forces to secure all off Afghanistan’s vital population centers before the troops began withdrawing later on that year.

(2) The population-centric COIN strategy was the wrong strategy to implement due to conditions on the ground.

The United States’ COIN strategy “rested upon the assumption that a ‘lack of governance’ was a universal driver of the insurgency, for which service delivery was the appropriate cure.”¹⁶⁷ Though this analysis rang true in some parts of southern Afghanistan, in other areas, particularly some remote parts of eastern Afghanistan, observers suggested that the presence of U.S., ISAF, ANSF forces became a fueling factor.¹⁶⁸ COIN has proved more difficult to apply in the sparsely-populated mountains of Kunar and Nuristan provinces where tribes view outsiders (even Afghans from different regions) with great skepticism.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, “improving the Afghan government’s capacity to deliver services to populations will not necessarily make the government more legitimate—the strategic objective of COIN.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, (New York: Knopf, 2014), 109.

¹⁶⁵ George Zornick, “Why Does Obama Want to Extend a War He Doesn’t Believe In?” 1.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶⁷ Frances Z. Brown, “Taking Stock of the Surge: From the Bottom Up,” 2

¹⁶⁸ James Fussell, “Kunar and Nuristan: Rethinking U.S. Counterinsurgency Operations,” 3

¹⁶⁹ Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America’s Longest War*, 61.

¹⁷⁰ Robert D. Lamb & Brooke Shawn, “Is Revised COIN Manual Backed by Political Will?” 2.

Secondly, U.S. and ISAF officials were unable to convince Hamid Karzai or his advisors that a counterinsurgency strategy was the right strategy to carry out in the first place. This created a lot of friction amongst U.S. officials and Karzai, who believed that his government “was fighting a proxy war started by Pakistan, not a contest of domestic legitimacy.”¹⁷¹ Despite these differing points of view, U.S. and ISAF forces were still able to reclaim large stretches of territory lost to the Taliban and improve security in Helmand and Kandahar provinces. Yet, none of these victories or improvements in security seemed to matter to Karzai as he “seemed both uninterested in and unappreciative of what the COIN advocates took as mounting evidence that all was going according to plan.”¹⁷² Thus, as pointed out by General Karl Eikenberry, “in its implementation of COIN doctrine in Afghanistan, the U.S. military was playing American football, so to speak. It was not at all clear what sport Karzai was playing, or indeed whether he was even in the same stadium.”¹⁷³

Finally, the U.S.’s COIN strategy could not resolve the “whole of government” issue.¹⁷⁴

“The U.S. military can deal with armed insurgents and help partner security forces do the same. But the military cannot do all the other things needed for lasting success at counterinsurgency, like helping the government develop an effective police force, good governance, a fair legal system, and a prosperous economy.”¹⁷⁵

Even though there have been real improvements in interagency coordination and collaboration over the past 10 years, agencies such as the State Department and USAID

¹⁷¹ Robert D. Lamb & Brooke Shawn, “Is Revised COIN Manual Backed by Political Will?,” <http://csis.org/publication/revised-coin-manual-backed-political-will> [accessed May 7-February 7, 2014], 2.

¹⁷² Karl W. Eikenberry “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan.”<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/136845> [accessed October 17 – September/October 2013], 7.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 7.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 7.

¹⁷⁵ Steven Metz, “U.S. Military Learns COIN Lessons, but They Might Not Be Enough,” <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13764/u-s-military-learns-coin-lessons-but-they-might-not-be-enough> [accessed May 7-May 7, 2014], 2.

continue to lack the capacity and resources to compliment the Defense Department's efforts.¹⁷⁶ Thus, "the U.S. military can plead for greater interagency assistance during a counterinsurgency or stabilization campaign, but it very rarely gets the help or support it needs."¹⁷⁷

(3) The United States' COIN strategy significantly overestimated the political will that existed in the U.S. to engage in costly long-term nation-building operations.

According to Carl von Clausewitz, "war is a contest of political will executed through violence."¹⁷⁸ Even though warfare has changed exponentially since Clausewitz wrote his essay on war in 1832, his observation on the importance of political will is still accurate: "Not only does war serve to achieve political ends, but they are waged by the political will of citizens."¹⁷⁹ The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have served as a reminder of the importance of maintaining political will.

According to Justin Lynch (2014), "if the population of a democracy is to maintain its passion for a military campaign, the people need to believe that the campaign will provide a worthwhile victory at a reasonable cost. Unfortunately, large counterinsurgencies are typically costly and often do not provide clear rewards."¹⁸⁰ One of the most famous T.E. Lawrence quotes, so often used to discuss proper counter-insurgent tactics, is "making war upon rebellion is messy and slow, like learning to eat

¹⁷⁶ Robert D. Lamb & Brooke Shawn, "Is Revised COIN Manual Backed by Political Will?," <http://csis.org/publication/revised-coin-manual-backed-political-will> [accessed May 7-February 7, 2014], 2.

¹⁷⁷ Steven Metz, "U.S. Military Learns COIN Lessons, but They Might Not Be Enough," <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13764/u-s-military-learns-coin-lessons-but-they-might-not-be-enough> [accessed May 7-May 7, 2014], 2.

¹⁷⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited by Anatol Rapaport (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 109 seen Ty Seidule, "What Congress Needs to Know About War," http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/01/congress-war-114508.html#.VP8dF_4cR7g [accessed February 17-January 25, 2015], 1.

¹⁷⁹ Ty Seidule, "What Congress Needs to Know About War," http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/01/congress-war-114508.html#.VP8dF_4cR7g [accessed February 17-January 25, 2015], 1.

¹⁸⁰ Justin Lynch, "Counterinsurgencies and Deterrence," <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/counterinsurgencies-and-deterrence> [accessed July 2-January 21, 2014], 1.

soup with a knife.”¹⁸¹ Thus, skeptics argue that an American public worn after a decade of continuous war “will never support long-term deployments of U.S. soldiers, and so serious counterinsurgency campaigns are a nonstarter.”¹⁸²

In order to garner and maintain public support for future long-term conflicts such as counterinsurgency operations, U.S. civilian and military leaders should only wage wars that have clear political goals and provide the American people with a “meaningful material or emotional reward.”¹⁸³ Moreover, “questions need to be asked about potential negative consequences of adopting a doctrine that would require consistent, high-level support across multiple changes in presidential administrations.”¹⁸⁴ Finally, there needs to be major changes in the institutional culture of the military as well as the United States government.¹⁸⁵

Even if U.S. policy makers are able to make the case for a large-scale counterinsurgency campaign to the American public, these conflicts are very costly.¹⁸⁶ Between 2010 and 2012, “it cost \$1 million to keep one American service member in Afghanistan for a year.”¹⁸⁷ That meant the annual bill for the war during this timeframe was about \$100 billion a year.¹⁸⁸ With the fragile state of the U.S. economy during , “the Obama administration found it very hard to justify spending another \$300 to \$400 billion (borrowed to boot) to keep Hamid Karzai’s corrupt government in power and the Taliban

¹⁸¹ T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom A Triumph*, (Virginia: Wilder, 2011), Chapter XXXiii.

¹⁸² Max Boot, “More Small Wars: Counterinsurgency is Here to Stay,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142187/max-boot/more-small-wars> accessed February 12-November 2014], 1.

¹⁸³ Justin Lynch, “Counterinsurgencies and Deterrence,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/counterinsurgencies-and-deterrence> [accessed July 2-January 21, 2014], 1.

¹⁸⁴ Robert D. Lamb & Brooke Shawn, “Is Revised COIN Manual Backed by Political Will?,” <http://csis.org/publication/revised-coin-manual-backed-political-will> [accessed May 7-February 7, 2014], 2.

¹⁸⁵ Max Boot, “More Small Wars: Counterinsurgency is Here to Stay,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142187/max-boot/more-small-wars> accessed February 12-November 2014], 5.

¹⁸⁶ Justin Lynch, “Counterinsurgencies and Deterrence,” 2.

¹⁸⁷ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “The Afghan Surge is Over,” 4.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 4.

at bay with so many Americans struggling at home.”¹⁸⁹

Finally, the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made it much more difficult for U.S. policy makers to convince a skeptical public of the need to participate in future and currently ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Northern Africa. According to Justin Lynch (2014), “the American people’s support for war receded so much that they doubt the wisdom of invading Iraq and Afghanistan at all, much less engaging in a protracted insurgency.”¹⁹⁰ Lynch points to data gathered from multiple Gallup polls taken from November 2001 to March 2013.¹⁹¹ These polls show that “the percentage of the American population who believed it was a mistake to invade Afghanistan gradually rose from 11 percent in 2001 to 49 percent in 2013.”¹⁹²

Moreover, a poll released by CNN on December 30, 2013, showed that only 17% of those questioned supported the 12-year-long war, down from 52% in 2008.¹⁹³ According to CNN Polling director Keating Holland, those numbers show the war in Afghanistan with far less support than any other conflict.¹⁹⁴ “Opposition to the Iraq War never got higher than 69% in CNN polling while U.S. troops were in that country, and while the Vietnam War was in progress, no more than six in 10 ever told Gallup’s interviewers that the war was a mistake.”¹⁹⁵

The public response to the ongoing conflicts in Libya and Syria also illustrates the

¹⁸⁹ Karl W. Eikenberry “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan.” 6.

¹⁹⁰ Justin Lynch, “Counterinsurgencies and Deterrence,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/counterinsurgencies-and-deterrence> [accessed July 2-January 21, 2014], 2.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹² Gallup.Com, “Afghanistan,” <http://www.gallup.com/poll/116233/afghanistan.aspx> [accessed-July 2-February 9, 2014], 2 seen in Justin Lynch, “Counterinsurgencies and Deterrence,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/counterinsurgencies-and-deterrence> [accessed July 2-January 21, 2014], 3.

¹⁹³ Keating Holland, “CNN Poll: Afghanistan War Arguably Most Unpopular in U.S. History,” <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2013/12/30/cnn-poll-afghanistan-war-most-unpopular-in-u-s-history/> [accessed April 29- December 30, 2013], 1.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 1.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 1.

American people's unwillingness to participate in future counterinsurgency operations or long-term conflicts. According to Justin Lynch (2014),

“A Gallup Poll taken in March 2011 during the air intervention in Libya, only 28% of Americans approved of sending in ground troops, even as thousands of surface to air missiles sat unguarded after the fall of the Qaddafi regime. Popular support for an intervention in Syria a year and a half later was even lower.”¹⁹⁶

A Gallup poll released on September 6th found that “only 36% of Americans supported the use of military force in Syria, despite reports surfacing in mid-August 2013 that Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad had used chemical weapons against his own people, potentially killing hundreds or even thousands of civilians.”¹⁹⁷ As seen from these polls “the lack of clear victories and high financial and self-perception costs in large counterinsurgencies reduces the probability that the American people will support future military action, or maintain support once it has begun.”¹⁹⁸ Thus, as pointed out by the ancient Chinese military sage Sun-Tzu, “there has never been a protracted war from which a country has benefited.”¹⁹⁹

Conclusion

There appears “to be a growing sense that the era of counterinsurgency that began shortly after 9/11 is drawing to a close.”²⁰⁰ The American people have made it clear that after a decade of war in both Iraq and Afghanistan, they are tired of foreign military

¹⁹⁶ Rebecca Stewart, “Polls: Americans approve of military action in Libya.” *Central News Network*, April 19, 2011 seen in Justin Lynch, “Counterinsurgencies and Deterrence,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/counterinsurgencies-and-deterrence> [accessed July 2-January 21, 2014], 3.

¹⁹⁷ Andrew Dugan, “U.S. Support for Action Syria is Low vs. Past Conflicts,” <http://www.gallup.com/poll/164282/support-syria-action-lower-past-conflicts.aspx> [accessed July 2-September 6, 2013], 1.

¹⁹⁸ Justin Lynch, “Counterinsurgencies and Deterrence,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/counterinsurgencies-and-deterrence> [accessed July 2-January 21, 2014], 10.

¹⁹⁹ Samuel Griffith, *Sun Tzu and the Art of Modern Warfare* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1963), 73 seen in Karl W. Eikenberry “The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan.” 6

²⁰⁰ Thomas E. Ricks, “Ten Questions About the Future of Counterinsurgency and Stabilization Ops,” <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/02/06/ten-questions-about-the-future-of-counterinsurgency-and-stabilization-ops-i-2/> [accessed July 7-February 6, 2013], 1.

adventures and are unwilling to provide political support for any large-scale COIN campaign. There is also the belief that the United States cannot afford to fight these campaigns anymore, “not in an age of austerity and fiscal cliffs.”²⁰¹ Moreover, too many political and military leaders have lost confidence in the current counterinsurgency strategy.²⁰² Thus, as American and NATO forces continue their withdrawal from Afghanistan, it appears unlikely that the United States will find itself engaged in another pro-longed counterinsurgency conflict any time in the near future.

On January 5, 2012, “the Obama Administration gave new strategic guidance as a roadmap to the United States’ priorities in engaging the Pacific region, Africa, and Middle East.”²⁰³ According to the new guidance, U.S. forces

“will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations of the type undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instability will be addressed by the U.S. through non-military means and military to military cooperation. U.S. forces would only consider limited stability and counterinsurgency operations if required operating alongside coalition forces wherever possible. They will, of course, maintain a presence abroad including rotational deployments and training exercises designed to build capacity and interoperability.”²⁰⁴

Simultaneously, the Department of Defense began reducing the overhead cost within the military services and across the defense enterprise by an estimated \$200 billion which is projected to last through FY 2017.²⁰⁵ Currently, the DoD is requesting \$495.6 billion for

²⁰¹ F. Stephen Larabee, “NATO Forces Approach Financial Day of Reckoning,” <http://www.rand.org/pubs/periodicals/rand-review/issues/2012/winter/nato-approaches-financial-day-of-reckoning.html> [accessed July 7-Winter 2012], 1.

²⁰² Robert Lamb & Brooke Shawn, “Is Revised COIN Manual Backed by Political Will?” 3.

²⁰³ Miles D. (2012). PACOM’s Priorities Reflect New Strategic Guidance,” <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116379> seen in Oscar Ware, “Preparing for an Irregular Future-Counterinsurgency,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrn1/art/preparing-for-an-irregular-future-counterinsurgency> [accessed July 3-July 18, 2013], 3.

²⁰⁴ Satish Chandra, “Obama’s new Strategic Guidance Indicates a Shift in Defense Policy,” <http://www.vifindia.org/print/1046> [accessed July 7-January 30, 2012], 3.

²⁰⁵ Defense Budget priorities and Choices-Fiscal Year 2014. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office seen in Oscar Ware, “Preparing for an Irregular Future-Counterinsurgency,” <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrn1/art/preparing-for-an-irregular-future-counterinsurgency> [accessed July 3-July 18, 2013], 3.

the base budget in FY 2015.²⁰⁶ This is “22 percent lower than the Pentagon’s all-time budget highs of \$716 billion in FY 2008, \$718 billion in FY 2009, and \$742 billion in FY 2010.”²⁰⁷ The Defense Department has also publicly stated its intention to reduce the size of the active-duty Army to between 440,000 and 450,000 troops and reduce the Marine Corps to 182,000 troops.²⁰⁸

Even though the United States is currently shifting away from long-term counterinsurgency and nation-building operations, the U.S. military must not simply forget the experiences and lessons learned during the last decade.²⁰⁹ In Libya, Syria, Nigeria, Yemen, and Somalia, “we are witnessing many of the same insurgency concerns seen in Afghanistan and Iraq: non-state actors, ineffective governments and civil institutions, military incompetence, tribal conflicts, and instances where conflict effects spread across sovereign borders.”²¹⁰ Despite having a vested interest in ensuring the effects of insurgency and terrorism do not spill over from these conflicts, the U.S has resisted direct military participation thus far.²¹¹

When domestic upheavals rocked the Middle East in the spring of 2011, “the Obama administration tried to avoid getting deeply involved.”²¹² During *Operation Odyssey Dawn* and the campaign to help Libyan rebels remove Muammar Gaddafi from power, the U.S.’s participation was mostly limited to

²⁰⁶ Paul D. Shinkman, “Massive Budget Cuts Would Redefine U.S. Military,” <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/02/24/pentagons-massive-budget-cuts-would-redefine-the-us-military> [accessed July 7-February 24, 2014], 2.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 2.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 3.

²⁰⁹ Thomas E. Ricks, “Ten Questions About the Future of Counterinsurgency and Stabilization Ops,” <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/02/06/ten-questions-about-the-future-of-counterinsurgency-and-stabilization-ops-i-2/> [accessed July 7-February 6, 2013], 1.

²¹⁰ Oscar Ware, “Preparing for an Irregular Future-Counterinsurgency,” 2.

²¹¹ Ibid., 2.

²¹² Richard N. Haass, “The Irony of American Strategy: Putting the Middle East in Proper Perspective,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139106/richard-n-haass/the-irony-of-american-strategy>, [accessed July 7-May 2013], 3.

“providing air and missile strikes and assisting the U.S.’s NATO partners with intelligence and command and control – ‘leading from behind,’ in the words of an anonymous administration official – and the United States showed no appetite for participating in an effort to stabilize, much less rebuild, Libya in the aftermath of Gaddafi’s fall.”²¹³

U.S. policy toward the civil war in Syria has been even more cautious.²¹⁴ Since 2012, the United States has thus far avoided direct military participation in support of the various groups fighting Bashar al-Assad’s regime. Moreover, U.S. officials have been very reluctant and unwilling to provide weapons and funding to the Syrian Opposition.²¹⁵

Finally, “conflicts will continue to break out and the United States will continue to be under frequent pressure to intervene in them.”²¹⁶ Thus, the U.S. may once again need a counterinsurgency strategy to defeat an insurgency or terrorist group.²¹⁷ However, before that day comes, two things must happen: (1) The United States must recognize that counterinsurgency and nation-building operations take time. Thus, civilian and military leaders must come up with clear political objectives before contributing U.S. blood and treasure to overseas conflicts. More importantly, policy makers must do a better job of explaining to the American people why it is important to support a conflict or operation that could last years. (2) U.S. military leaders must continue to revise current counterinsurgency doctrine so that it adopts a more realistic approach to what U.S. forces are currently experiencing on the ground. Only then will the United States know whether the lessons it has learned this past decade are adequate enough in meeting the challenges posed by future counterinsurgency campaigns.

²¹³ Ibid., 5.

²¹⁴ Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. Steps Up Aid to Syrian Opposition, Pledging \$65 Million,” *The New York Times*, February 28, 2013.

²¹⁵ Richard N. Haass, “The Irony of American Strategy: Putting the Middle East in Proper Perspective,” 5.

²¹⁶ Robert Lamb & Brooke Shawn, “Is Revised COIN Manual Backed by Political Will?” 3.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 3.

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